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2871

Friend - Society

TRACTS
PUBLISHED
BY THE
Tract Association
OF
FRIENDS
IN
NEW-YORK.

Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Eccl. xi. 1.
In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. Eccl. xi. 6.

New-York:

PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,
NO. 372, PEARL-STREET.

1824.

THE NEW YORK
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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

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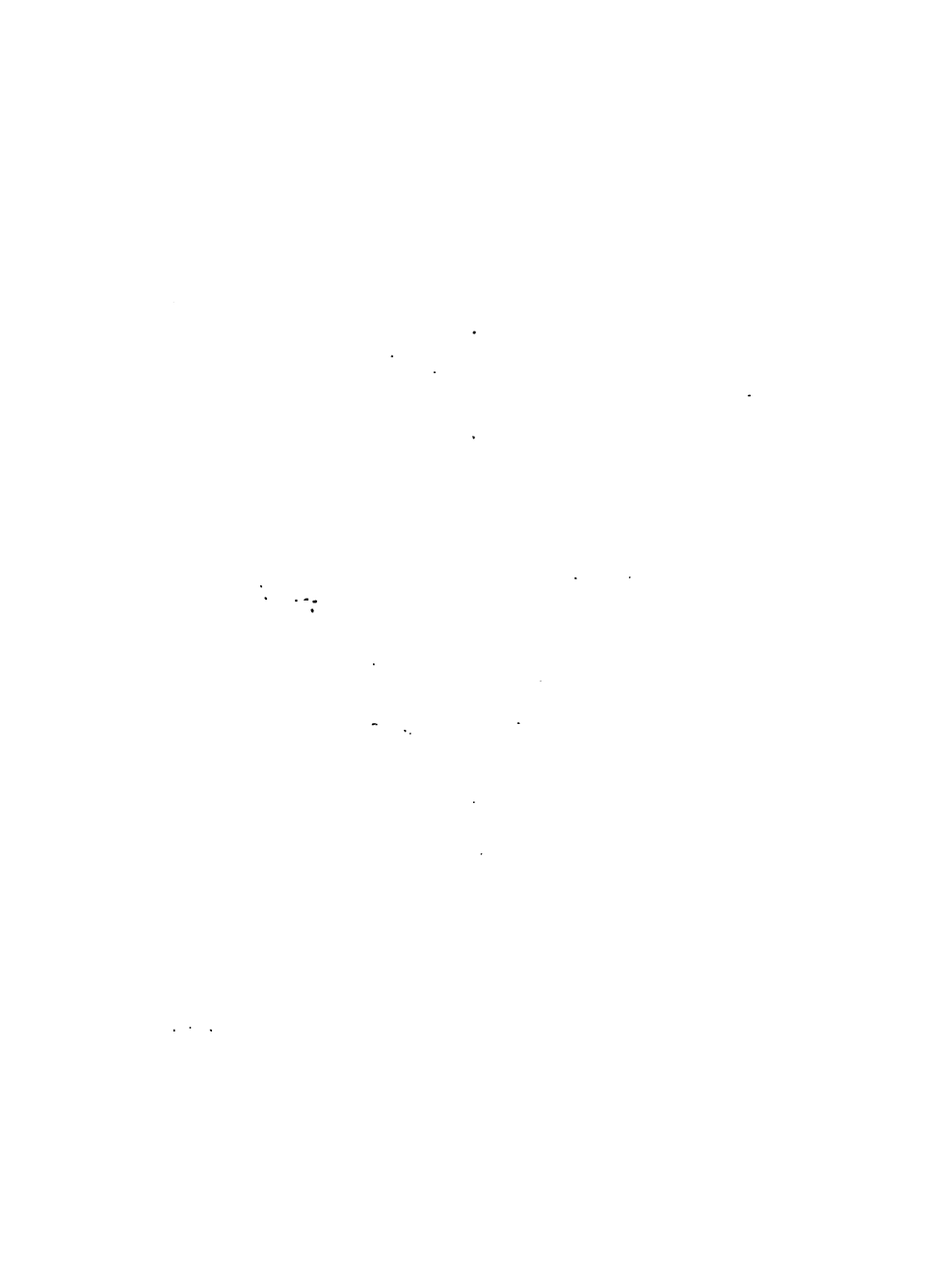
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- ✓ 6. The Principles and Practice of War, compared with the Precepts and Examples of Christ.
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- ✓ 18. On the Tendency of Dramatic Entertainments.
- ✓ 19. Letter on Militia Fines.
- ✓ 20. Remarks on Troubles of our own Making.
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- ✓ 22. Religion the only ground of Happiness.
- ✓ 23. The Christian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ 24. Self-Knowledge Essential to Virtue and Happiness.
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- ✓ 26. On the Advantages of the Cross, and of an Humble Resignation to the Divine Will.
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THE
SIXTH
ANNUAL REPORT,
OF THE
COMMITTEE of MANAGEMENT,
OF THE
TRACT ASSOCIATION
OF
FRIENDS,
IN
NEW-YORK.

NEW-YORK,
PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,
NO. 372, PEARL-STREET.
.....
1823.



*To the Tract Association of
Friends in New-York.*

The Committee of Management, appointed in 1822,

REPORT—

That all their stated meetings have been duly held, except two, during the prevalence of fever in the fall. On an average, more than two-thirds of their number have attended.

Deeming it expedient to keep a supply of most of the Tracts heretofore published, the Committee have selected and published but two new ones; namely,—

No. 24. Self-Knowledge essential to Virtue and Happiness.....	1,500
No. 25. A Serious and Earnest Ex- postulation	2,000
They have re-published the following eight :	
No. 1. Thoughts on the Importance of Religion	2,000
No. 8. On Ardent Spirits.....	1,000
No. 9. On Self-Examination	2,000
No. 10. Remarks on the Doctrine of the Influence of the Holy Spirit.....	1,000
No. 11. An Address in Gospel Love,	1,000
No. 12. A Letter from Wm. Penn, to his Wife and Children,.....	1,000
No. 13. The Ancient Christian's Principle, or Rule of Life.....	1,000
No. 17. Brief Hints to Parents, on the Subject of Education.....	4,000
	<hr/> 16,500

These, together with the number
 before published, namely, 88,000
 Make the total number of Tracts
 published by the Association 104,500

Finding that the expense of republication would be considerably lessened by stereotyping the Tracts, the Committee have procured plates of Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 24, and 25. Nos. 1, 8, and 9, had been previously stereotyped. From these plates, small editions may, from time to time, be printed, without the expense of setting types.

The Committee have received, during the past year, annual dues and donations to the amount of \$216 50 cents; and have expended \$196 76 cents. The Treasurer's accounts have been examined, and found

correct. There remains, in his hands, a balance of \$63 95 cents. But there will be required, for the completion of work now in hand, about 94 dollars.

In the selection of Tracts, the Committee have endeavoured to fix upon such as have a direct bearing upon the conduct of life, and are calculated to be practically useful. And the general approbation with which the Tracts have been received, while it affords satisfaction and encouragement to the Committee, confirms their judgement in relation to the tendency of such writings, and the utility of circulating them.

There are now remaining, in the hands
of the Depository, MAHLON DAY, at No. 372,
Pearl-street, of

No. 1. - 500	No. 11. - 50
No. 8. - 500	No. 12. - 100
No. 9. - 500	No. 13. - 140
No. 10. - 100	No. 20. - 200

There are also about 100 copies of the
bound volume containing the first twenty-
three numbers.

New-York, 4th Mo. 19th, 1823.

Committee of Management.

*Adam Mott,
Samuel Wood,
Richard Mott,
Joshua Underhill,
William F. Mott,
Benjamin Corlies,
Wager Hull,
John R. Willis,
Isaac Collins,
David S. Brown,*

*John Corlies,
Lindley Murray,
Joseph F. Carroll,
Goold Brown,
Mahlon Day,
Solomon Griffin,
Samuel Falconer,
Charles Lawton,
Willet Secor,
John Hancock.*

WILLIAM R. THURSTON, Treasurer,
ROBERT F. MOTT, Clerk.

THE
SEVENTH
ANNUAL REPORT.
OF THE
COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT,
OF THE
TRACT ASSOCIATION
OF
FRIENDS,
IN
NEW-YORK.

New-York :

PRINTED BY MAHLON BAY,

NO. 372, PEARL-STREET.

.....

***To the Tract Association
Friends, in New-York.***

**The Committee of Management, appointed
in 1823,**

REPORT:

**That all their stated meetings have been
duly held, except one; and, that on an average
two-thirds of their number have attended.**

**During the past year, the Committee have
selected and published the following two new
Tracts; namely,—**

No. 26. On the Advantages of the	
Cross, &c.....	3,0
No. 27. The Sick Man's Friend.....	3,0
And have re-published the following ten :	
No. 1. Thoughts on the Importance	
of Religion.....	1,0
No. 8. On Ardent Spirits.....	1,0
No. 9. On Self-Examination.....	1,0
No. 14. On the Peace of God.....	1,5

No. 16. On the Right Employment of Time	1,500
No. 17. Brief Hints to Parents on the Subject of Education	2,500
No. 20. On Troubles of our own Making,	1,500
No. 24. On Self-Knowledge	1,000
No. 25. A Serious and Earnest Ex- postulation	2,000
	<hr/> 20,500

These, together with the number be-
fore published, namely, 104,500

Make the total number of Tracts pub-
lished by the Association 125,000

Nos. 1, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 24, and
25, are stereotyped.

The Committee have received, during the
past year, donations and annual dues to the
amount of \$178 62 cents; and a balance of
\$63 95 cents remained in the Treasury last
year. They have drawn on the Treasury on
account of the abovementioned Tracts, and of
several bills that had not been rendered at the
time of the last report, to the amount of \$269
84 cents. Thus it will appear, that, in the sum
of \$27 27 cents, they have anticipated the
dues for 1824, which are now payable. The
Treasurer's accounts have been examined, and

are found to be correct ; he being in advance to the Association for the last mentioned sum.

The several Tracts, now published, being sufficient to form a convenient volume, the Committee have reserved a few copies of each number, that they may be able to furnish the bound, to those who may wish to preserve them in their libraries.

Copies of the bound volume have been forwarded to the Tract Associations of Friends in London, and in Ireland, from each of which we had received a similar present, accompanied by a friendly letter.

The Committee believe that their labours have been, and will continue to be, serviceable ; they therefore regret that their means are so very limited, and, particularly, that they are not able to keep a constant supply of the several Tracts already published.

The Tracts remaining on hand are deposited at MAHLON DAY's Book-store, 372, Pearl-street.

On behalf of the Committee, by

ROBERT F. MOTT, *Clerk.*

New-York, 5th Mo. 9th, 1824.

THOUGHTS
ON
THE IMPORTANCE
OF
RELIGION.



NO. I.
FOURTH EDITION.



New-York:

A VARIETY OF TRACTS, ON MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, ARE
FOR SALE AT THE BOOK-STORES OF SAMUEL WOOD AND SONS,
NO. 261, AND MAHLON DAY, NO. 372, PEARL-STREET, AT *one cent*
FOR TWELVE PAGES, TO THOSE WHO BUY FIFTY OR MORE COPIES
FOR DISTRIBUTION.

1825.



100



100

THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION.

EMBARKEED on the stream of time, and carried forward with uniform and irresistible force, how many sands do we see amusing themselves in the pursuit of shadows, or gliding along in stupid unconcern, notwithstanding their surrounding companions daily appear, and are gone, they know not whither. Also, fellow-traveller, are making rapid progress on our course, and it will surely be wise to devote a few moments to reflect upon the most important of all objects which can possibly occupy our attention ;—the purpose of our existence, and the end of our pilgrimage.

When we consider our animal frame, composed of parts so vital to the well-being of the whole, and put together with inimitable skill, or survey the means that have been appointed to sustain this fabric, during the brief period of its existence ; if we look upon the inferior animals, or study the structure of the vegetable tribes ; if, by means of the faculties we possess, we endeavour to understand a little of the laws which appear to regulate the operations incessantly taking place in this lower world ; or if we lift our eyes to the luminous bodies scattered through the immensity of space, all proceeding harmoniously in the manner prescribed to them,—should not our souls be filled with awe and reverence ? Nothing short of divine wisdom could have effected this : nothing but the power of infinite power could sustain it for a moment.

This wisdom and this power, O fellow-traveller, is God, even *thy* God. He has condescended to create thee what thou art. Kind and benevolent, as unlimited in power, he has provided for thy comfort, thy accommodation, thy pleasure, even here. He has furnished thee with suitable food, has enamelled the fields with flowers, and instructed every warbler of the grove in his peculiar song. He has endowed thee with reason, whereby thou mayest understand a little portion of his wonders; and, to crown the whole, has given thee a capacity to acquaint thyself with him, the Author of them all. Every thing proclaims that the object of the Creator is the happiness of his creatures; and if thou be not happy, the fault is in thyself. Do not suppose that thou art placed in this transitory scene, merely to eat, to drink, and to sleep, and, after a few years, to vanish away like a dream or like a vision of the night. No:—thy great Creator has called thee into existence, at that period which was consistent with his supreme will; and though thy frame shall go to decay when it may please him to call for the spirit which animates it, yet, be assured, that this spirit shall exist forever. When the present life ceases, thou must enter upon eternity, which will be either miserable beyond description, or unspeakably happy. The few and uncertain moments of thy present state, are all that are allowed thee to prepare for it. Be roused then to a just consideration of thy condition; venture not to sleep on the brink of a precipice, but apply thyself in earnest to the great work, before that awful proclamation is made,—‘He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.’*

The only means of becoming happy here and hereafter, is by earnestly endeavouring to know and perform the *will of God*. This we cannot do of ourselves; but *he* is graciously pleased to enable us, by giving to every one of his rational creatures, a portion of his good spirit,* which is secretly operating upon the soul. This it is that makes us uneasy when we do wrong, and which fills the mind with comfort and joy when we do right. Thus the Divine Being communicates with his creatures; thus he is constantly endeavouring to draw them to himself; and in proportion as they attend to these secret impulses, he manifests himself more and more clearly to them, and they become more closely united to him. In this way, the holy men† of old were inspired, and were employed as mediums to convey the most important truths to the rest of mankind. Their writings collected together are called the Holy Scriptures, and they early point out that conduct which will be acceptable to God.‡ But above all, they inform us, that in the fulness of time, our merciful Creator§ displayed his love to his rational creatures in a more conspicuous manner than he had done in preceding dispensations, by sending among them his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as a pattern and example to the end of time, and as the Redeemer of men. In him was seen what the world never beheld before; a person with all the feelings of human nature, and yet, without sin; by him the means of reconciliation and union with God were most clearly and affectingly displayed, and through him, those who feel the weight of their transgressions must seek for reconciliation. He is the

* Titus, ii. 11. † 2 Peter, i. 21. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 15. § Gal. iv. 4.

mediator between sinful man and the source of purity ; and though, having accomplished his mission in the flesh, and offered up his life on the cross as a propitiation for the sins of mankind, he is no longer beheld with the outward eye ; yet, he is present in the hearts of all those who are striving to know and perform the Divine Will : he is influencing them to good thoughts and good actions, enabling them to overcome their perverse natural inclinations, and to subdue their wills ; and thus he is *purifying*, and rendering them acceptable through himself, to his Heavenly Father. ‘ Behold I stand at the door and knock—If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.’* And again, ‘ If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our *abode* with him.’†—Infinite condescension ! Unutterable love ! His knocks are the monitions of his grace and good spirit in the heart ; and to attend to these and follow them, is to *open* unto him. This leads to our purification and consequent *fitness* for a closer communion with him. The heavenly visiter will now be no longer ‘ as a wayfaring man who tarrieth only for a night,’ but ‘ we will make our *abode* with him.’ This is the essence of true religion ; and, let our denominations in this world be what they may, if this be our happy experience, we shall belong to ‘ the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.’‡

But this Divine Spirit, which strives with man for his good, if neglected or resisted, will be gradually withdrawn ; we may harden our hearts against it,

despise its reproofs, and silence its voice *for a time*. We shall then be left to ourselves, and permitted to follow our own evil propensities ; our souls will be in a state of defilement, and alienation from the source of true happiness, and if we die in this state, dreadful indeed will be our portion. That witness for God which we have refused to hear, will then speak out in a voice not to be silenced, and from which we shall be no longer able to escape.

Now is the acceptable time ; now, while we have health and strength, let us use all diligence to acquaint ourselves with God, that we may be at peace, for though he desires the salvation* of all, *he will* be sought unto, and he has graciously promised to be found of those who seek him aright.

Our attempts will be much promoted by occasional and frequent retirement from the hurry and bustle of life, if it were only for one quarter of an hour at a time ; that we may pour out our souls unto our Heavenly Father in prayer, beseeching that he would manifest unto us *his* will, help us to subdue *our own*, and bring it into conformity with his. A diligent perusal of the Holy Scriptures is also an excellent means of strengthening our good desires, and comforting us under trial, if we entreat the Divine blessings to receive those eternal truths which are indeed hid from the wise and prudent of this world, but revealed to the babes in Christ.†

True prayer is by no means so difficult as some have imagined ; every secret aspiration to God, even if no words be uttered, is prayer ; and we may be in the exercise of it, even when our hands are engaged

* 1 Tim. ii. 4. † Matt. xi. 25.

in our lawful occupations. This is the prayer which our Lord enjoined to his disciples, that they ~~may~~ not enter into temptation.* Many awakened souls have suffered great loss, and made for themselves a long wilderness, by consulting with those who were as much at a loss as themselves, and going from one learned man to another to seek that *without*, which can only be found *within*. The kingdom of God, said Christ,† is *within* you, his constant reference was to *this* : his constant aim, to turn men from a dependence upon the ceremonies of religion to the essence of it. When we are so far convinced of these great truths as to give up ourselves wholly to God, and can say with sincerity, 'Thy will, and not mine, be done;' then we shall enjoy that heavenly communion which constitutes the happiness of the blessed above. Narrow prejudices will no longer exist; our souls will expand with love to our fellow-creatures, and we shall consider all mankind as branches of the same family, having one common Father. We shall feel a real interest in the happiness of all within our influence, and endeavour to promote it to the utmost of our power. These are the effects which would be produced by submitting to the operation of Divine Grace in the heart. 'We shall then experimentally know that God is good.' We shall be qualified to taste and see *how* gracious he is, by his influence upon our minds, by those virtuous thoughts which he awakens in us, by those secret comforts and refreshments which he conveys into our souls, and by those ravishing joys and inward satisfactions which are perpetually springing up and diffusing themselves

among all the thoughts of good men. He is lodged in our very essence, and is as a soul within the soul, to irradiate its understanding, rectify its will, purify its passions, and enliven all the powers of man. How happy is an intellectual being, who by prayer and meditation, by virtue and good works, opens this communication between God and his own soul ! Though the whole creation frowns upon him, and all nature looks black about him, he has his light and support within him, that are able to cheer his mind and bear him up in the midst of all those horrors which encompass him. He knows that his helper is at hand, and is always nearer to him than any thing else can be which is capable of annoying or terrifying him. In the midst of calumny or contempt, he attends to that Being who whispers better things within his soul, and whom he looks upon as his defender, his glory, and the lifter up of his head. In his deepest solitude and retirement, he knows that he is in company with the greatest of Beings ; and perceives within himself such real sensations of his presence, as are more delightful than any thing that can be met with in the conversation of his creatures. Even in the hour of death, he considers the pains of his dissolution to be nothing else but the breaking down of that partition, which stands betwixt his soul and the sight of that Being who is always present with him, and is about to manifest himself to him in fulness of joy.* If we duly ponder these things, fellow-traveller, and give up our hearts to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the end of *our* journey will be the beginning of a new existence, inconceivably glorious, and eternally happy !

* Collection of papers from the Spectator.

EXTRACT

FROM THE

JOURNAL OF JOB SCOTT.



I AM renewedly confirmed in a sentiment I have long been settled in ; which is, that there never was, and never will be, but one true religion in the world ; to wit, ‘ *The work of the Spirit of God in the souls of mankind ;*’ that some of all denominations have something of this True Religion, even though some of them, through the prejudice of education, may disallow it in profession : and that no man has any real religion but what he comes to the knowledge and experience of, through the influence of this Holy Spirit. This it is that begins and carries on the work ; this it is that, by its own divine influence, operating in the minds of mankind, reveals Christ in them, ‘ the hope of glory ;’* or so operates from time to time, on reading the Scriptures, or other good books, on hearing the gospel preached, on meditating on the works of Creation and Providence, on God’s judgments in the earth, or his dealings with themselves, as individuals ; or whatever other occasion, circumstance or thing, is ever made a means of conviction or conversion ; the Holy Spirit so operates, I say, in all these cases, as to produce the happy effect : and with-

out the inward operation thereof, all these other opportunities and things would be utterly in vain, as to salvation, and never able to produce the least degree of true religion or sanctification in the soul. So that, though there are many opinions, many creeds, professions and denominations, and some truly religious persons in them all : yet there is and can be but one *true religion* : all true religion is of one kind : all springs from one source. And, blessed and adored for ever be the Lord, in order that all men may, if they will, be benefitted experimentally by this one true religion, ‘ the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.* He that rightly profits thereby, and continues so to do, will live in the exercise of the one true faith, will witness the one true Christian baptism, will know and obey the one living Lord, will by the Holy Ghost, in word and deed, acknowledge and call him Lord, and so will be saved by an everlasting salvation. And on the other hand, seeing a measure of the Holy Spirit is given to every man ; seeing ‘ the grace of God, that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men,’† seeing the light and life of the Holy Word which in the beginning was with God and was God, hath enlightened ‘ every man that cometh into the world ;’‡ and seeing moreover, Christ Jesus has tasted ‘ death for every man’§ how shall we escape if we neglect and reject so great salvation ? How great must be the condemnation of every soul, thus highly favoured, which yet stands out and rejects the strivings of the Spirit, the teachings of Grace, the shinings and convictions of the Divine

* Cor. xii. 7. † Tit. ii. 11. ‡ John i. 9. § Heb. ii. 9.

Light ! Now, this **Light, Grace, and Spirit of God,** is all one under different appellations. It is called **Spirit,** because it is quick, lively, and operative ; and quickens the soul to a sensibility of its state and condition ; it is called **Grace,** because it is the free, unmerited gift of God ; and it is called **Light,** because it makes manifest ; as, whatsoever doth make manifest, is **Light,*** say the Scriptures. And as this grace or light is attended to, it will bring the soul into a state of grace and favour with God. Well, therefore, might the Apostle, with holy reverence, break forth in these expressions, ‘ Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift !’† And all who obey the light, will be brought out of darkness into his marvellous **Light ;** for though the hearts of fallen men are grossly darkened, yet the light shineth in their dark hearts ; and though the darkness comprehendeth it not, if it is taken heed unto, it will shine more and more unto the perfect day ; even until the whole body be full of light. But those who rebel against the **Light,** will grow darker and darker, until they know not the way thereof, nor understand the paths thereof ; and become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts will become darkened ; having loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

* Eph. v. 13. † 2 Cor. ix. 15

FINIS.

ON
FAITHFULNESS

IN

LITTLE THINGS.



No. 2.

SECOND EDITION.



NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,

No. 84, *Water-street.*

1819.



ON

Faithfulness in Little Things.

THE opportunities for displaying great deeds of goodness are rare, and when they do present themselves, there are many powerful stimulants to kindle magnanimity and perseverance. But the little occasions to stand firm in the cause of truth come upon us inadvertently; and almost every moment they render it necessary for us, without ceasing, to maintain a warfare against pride, slothfulness, and a domineering, lordly disposition; against precipitancy, impatience, &c.; opposing our corrupt wills every where, and in all things. If we will be faithful herein, our fallen nature will have no spare time to draw breath, but must die to all its propensities.

Supporting a life of godliness, is like unto successful management and economy in outward and domestic affairs. If attention is not paid to minute matters, frugally to save, and avoid unnecessary expenses, there is a greater probability, step by step, of a declension in point of property, than by large undertakings which na-

turally excite caution. He who learns, by Divine assistance, to make a right application in small matters of a spiritual nature, will not fail to accumulate much treasure, as well as he who is attentive in temporal concerns. Great things are only great, because many small materials are brought and combined together—he who is careful to lose nothing, will generally increase his wealth. It is well for us to consider that it is not so much what we do, as the motives of love in which our actions originate, and surrendering our own wills; this it is alone which renders our good works acceptable, in the Divine sight. People judge of our actions according to outward observation, but with God, those things are nothing, which in the eyes of men shine with great lustre, for he requires a sincere intention, a will ready to bend to his will, on all occasions, and an upright entire forsaking ourselves.

Our faith is tried more powerfully in common occurrences, and less exposed to a mixture of pride, than in uncommon and remarkable concerns. We also find that we are many times more attached to certain little things, than to matters of moment—for instance, some would find it much easier to give generous alms, than to deny themselves a favourite diversion. Man is very liable to become beguiled by little things, because he looks on them as matters of indifference, and imagines himself free from any powerful attachment to them; but when God commands him to forsake them, he finds by painful experience, how inordinate and unwarrantable his attachment to, and practice of them was; besides, through our inattention to small duties, we frequently give offence and stumble our families, and those about us; for people cannot believe that we fear God with uprightness, when our conduct in small concerns is immoderate and careless; for how can an observer reconcile the idea of our being strong and scrupulous observers of important duties that require the greatest sacrifices, when matters of small account have an undue ascendancy over us; but the greatest danger herein is, that the soul through

careless indifference in lesser things, becomes gradually accustomed to unfaithfulness, grieves the Holy Spirit, and by degrees learns to account it a matter of small consequence to go counter to the will of God: on the contrary, true love esteems nothing indifferent; every thing capable of pleasing or displeasing God, appearing great; not that true love drives the soul into a slavish fearful scrupulousness, but it allows of no particular set bounds to faithfulness; it moves the mind in simplicity to pass by those things that God doth not require, but does not hesitate a moment about those things he does require, be they great or small; so that our obedience in small matters does not originate from a forcible terror on the mind; it all arises in and by a continual current and power of love, free from those slavish fears and consultations, accompanying restless, anxious, and distressed souls. Man is drawn into the way of his duty through love to God: for even in the time of greatest trial, when the Spirit of truth unceasingly urges the submissive soul, step by step in the observance of small duties, and seems about to divest it of all freedom, behold, it finds itself on a wide plain, and enjoys the depth of peace and freedom in him. —Oh! how happy is that soul.

Finally, it is particularly necessary for those who are naturally of an inadvertent and unwatchful disposition to be mindful. Man, by paying little regard to small duties, becomes accustomed to make no account of them; he does not enough consider the lead and tendency thereof; —he does not enough view the almost imperceptible ascendancy and assimilation of these things, in and with his fallen propensities—he forgets the compunction and remorse which these things have heretofore occasioned:—he had rather indulge an imaginary idea of his establishment, and depend on his own judgment, (which has, however, oftentimes deceived him) than to settle down into a constant, diligent, attentive watchfulness. We are apt to say it is a little thing, it is nothing, yea, it is nothing! —but it is a nothing on which thy all depends—such

a nothing as thou so inordinately lovest, as to cleave to it in preference to the will of God—a nothing, which thou wilt despise in words, in order to frame an excuse for thy non-observance of it; but in the ground, it is a nothing which thou holdest fast, against the will of God, and which, if continued in, will bring thee to ruin.

Despising small things does not, as some assert, arise from greatness of mind, but far otherwise, from a short-sightedness, esteeming things small, which in their tendency and consequences have a very extensive reach and effect. The more we discover ourselves inclined to indifference in small things, and the more we find it a trial to us to pay attention herein, the more we ought to fear and become jealous, yea, and to cast up bulwarks against a spirit of indifference and carnal security—he that despises little things, will certainly fall by little and little. Be not afraid of a constant watchfulness of mind in small things: a godly resolution is necessary in the beginning, and the exercise and suffering thou endurest, thou hast well deserved, it being very necessary for the perfecting of thy peace and security, out of which there is nothing but disquiet and backsliding. God will render this path more and more sweet and pleasant. True love is watchful and attentive without great and painful restraint of spirit.

Augustine saith, “little things are little things, but to be faithful in little things is something great.”

FINIS.

SENTIMENTS

ON PRAYER,

EXTRACTED

FROM SEVERAL AUTHORS.

NO. 4.
SECOND EDITION.

NEW-YORK :
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NO. 372, PEARL-STREET.

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MATT. vi. 5, 6, 7, 8.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are : for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do : for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye, therefore, like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

MATT. xxvi. 41.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

MARK xiii. 37.

What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

ON PRAYER.



PRAYER is a *devout, sincere, and hearty* address, or application of the soul, to the adorable majesty of God, under the *influence* and *assistance* of the Divine Spirit; in which only the soul hath access to him, and acceptance with him; and therefore an inward retirement to the Divine Grace is essential to a right performance of true prayer.

We must always bear in mind the *purity* and *holiness* of God, how unmeet and unfit we are to draw nigh to him in an *unholy* frame of heart. Our hearts must be washed, and made clean. We must “cease to do evil, and learn to do well;” for “without *holiness*, no man shall see the Lord.” How unacceptable are all dead, dry, and formal religious performances, not proceeding from a pure heart, influenced and quickened by the Holy Spirit.

On the contrary, how acceptable to Him are the sacrifices and offerings of a clean heart, enlightened and guided by the Divine Spirit! What delight and comfort doth the soul feel! What returns of love from the Divine Presence! What times of refreshing come from Him! What new life and vigour is the soul inspired with, to abandon all the ways of vice, and persevere in virtue and the love of God! How is the heart “enlarged to run the

way of God's commandments!"* and indeed, "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."† These come "into his courts with praise."‡

The learned and judicious *Dr. Robert Gell*, who lived in the reign of King Charles the First, and preached a sermon before him at Newmarket, in the year 1631, saith,—‘*Words conceived only in an earthly mind, and uttered out of the memory by the man’s voice, which make a noise in the ears of flesh and blood, are not, nor can be accounted a prayer before our Father which is in Heaven.*’ Vol. i. fol. 156.

‘And therefore, *devotion* is said to be a *moving of the mind and will towards God*; which may be in manifold acts; as holy meditation, resignation, or lifting up the heart by prayer and thanksgiving unto God.’ Ibid. 544.

‘What do we else, but *betray our Lord with a kiss*, when, in praying and praising and singing and preaching, we draw *near* unto him with our *lips*, but our *hearts* are *far* from him?’ Ibid. 307.

Dr. Smalldridge, late Bishop of Bristol, in the 16th folio of his Sermons, says,—‘Prayer doth not consist either in the bending of our knees, or the service of our lips, or the lifting up of our hands or eyes to heaven; but in the elevation of our souls towards God. These outward expressions of our

* Psal. cxix. 32. † Matt. v. 8. ‡ Psal. c. 4.

inward thoughts are necessary in our public, and often expedient in our private devotions ; but they do not make up the essence of prayer, which may truly and acceptably be performed where these are wanting.

‘ *Devotion* of mind is itself a *silent prayer*, which wants not to be clothed in words, that God may better know our desires.’ Folio 38. It is true, indeed, that God regards not the service of our lips, but the inward disposition of our hearts.’ Folio 39.

In the *Golden Remains* of the ever memorable *John Hales*, he delivers himself thus, (in his Sermon on Luke xviii. 1.)

‘ Prayer requires no outward labour of the body, no outward fashion or manner of doing, but is internally acted in the soul itself. Quaint, witty, and *set forms* of prayer, proceed many times from ostentation more than devotion. Nay, one thing I know more, that the most *forcible prayer* transcends and far exceeds all *power of words*. For St. Paul, speaking unto us concerning the most effectual kind of prayer, calls it sighs and groans that cannot be expressed. Nothing does cry so loud in the ears of God, as the sighing of a contrite and earnest heart.’ Page 182.

The ingenious *Monro*, vicar of Letter Kenney, in the kingdom of Ireland, in the second edition of his *Just Measures of the Pious Institution of Youth*, says, ‘—All, I doubt not, will allow, that it is not

the *expressions*, how fluent soever they be, but the *heart*, that God regards, and that the seeming fervour which is occasioned by the tone of the voice, is not the genuine fire of devotion ; it is very possible, that one may be truly devout, though he makes no use of either words or voice.

‘The breathings of a recollected soul, are not noisy or clamorous : the language in which devotion loves to vent itself, is that of the *inward man*, which is *secret* and *silent* ; but yet God hears it, and makes gracious returns unto it.—Sometimes the pious ardours and sensations of good souls, are such as they cannot clothe with words ; they *feel* what they cannot *express*. I would not, however, be thought to insinuate, that the voice and words are not to be used at all : What I here aim at is, that the youth should be made sensible that *words* are not otherwise valuable, than as they are *images* and *copies* of what passes in the *hidden man of the heart* : especially considering, that a great many who appear very angelical in their devotions, if we take our measures of them from their voice and tone, do soon, after these intervals of seeming seriousness are over, give palpable evidences of their earthliness and sensuality, pride and passion, and the like irregularities.’ Ibid. part ii. page 206, 207.

‘It will not, I suppose, be unseasonable, on this occasion, to take notice of that ordinary distinction of devotion, by which it is divided into vocal and mental ; and to give a brief explanation of it. The *vocal* is, when by our voice and words we express outwardly our *inward sentiments* and *affections* ; or, in the royal Psalmist’s phrase,* when the heart in-

* Psal. xiv. 1.

rites, and the tongue is as the pen of a ready writer. Whence it appears that *vocal prayers* ought not to have the name of devotion, unless there be a conjunction of the heart and voice; and therefore, though one says and pronounces ever so many good words, yet if there be not correspondent motion in the *inward man*, he cannot be truly said to *pray*. His words, in this case, are but as shells without the kernels; and his voice as sounding brass; which certainly are lean sacrifices, and unfit to be presented to God, who will be worshipped in *spirit* and in *truth*, and rejects the addresses of such as pretend to honour him with their *lips*, when their *hearts* are far from him.

‘Mental devotion, is that which is transacted in the hidden man of the heart; and it comprehends not only the silent, vehement pantings of the soul after God, but also the secret manifestations that God makes of himself unto the soul: for it is in both these together, that the spiritual and holy intercourse that is between God and pure minds, doth consist. Of this *internal devotion* there are two sorts, which I shall briefly consider; the first is, when one employs or exercises his faculties, that is, his understanding, will, and desire, in the contemplation, love, and adoration of the beauties and perfections of God, and in aspiring after his gracious communications, and conformity to his holy will and nature. Here the soul is active and particular, sometimes it views one perfection, sometimes another. It contemplates God in his word, and works, and providences. And according to the several views it hath of him, it forms several and distinct acts, such as of faith, of love, of hope, of gratitude, of humility, and the like; taking occasion from every thing of making devout sallies and ejaculations.

‘The other sort is, when the devout soul, being disengaged from all created things, from sin and self and corruption, and firmly believing that God who filleth all things, is *present* in the soul, and ready to display his power, and communicate his light and graces, doth by an act of faith, state himself in his presence ; and there, having turned the eye of the soul to the interior, and made an entire surrender of himself into the hands of God, with an humble desire, that he would dispose of him as he pleases, and that his holy will may be done in him, he continues in a *profound silence* and recollection, *waiting for the divine good pleasure*.

‘Now, though the soul, when it is entering on this state, be active, yet, being once [entered] in, it ceases from all particular and distinct operations of its own: not that it is then idle ; on the contrary, it is in this juncture, employed in the noblest manner, for it doth, in a full bent and tendency, and with its powers all united, move vigourously towards God ; but still in a way of tranquillity and repose, and without acting particularly ; and the heavenly graces of faith, hope, and love, of humility and resignation, are then, in the sublimest exercise, though not distinctly apprehended by the soul ; whereupon the blessed God, as the experience of many eminently devout persons doth abundantly justify, visits these souls that depend on Him, with his peculiar favours, displays in them the riches of his power and grace, and makes them feel, in an ineffable manner, the reality of his presence in their inward man ; whence it comes to pass, that they improve wonderfully in every thing that is good, just and true, pure and lovely, and advance with speed towards Christian perfection.

‘I am persuaded that it would be vastly advantageous for the *youth*, if care were taken to train them up to this method of prayer: that is, if they were taught frequently to consider themselves as in the Divine Presence, and there *silently* to adore their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. For hereby they would become habitually recollected; devotion would be their element, and they would know by experience, what our blessed Saviour and his great Apostle meant, when they enjoin us to *pray without ceasing*. It was, I suppose, by some such method of devotion as I am now speaking of, that *Enoch walked with God*,* that *Moses saw Him that is invisible*,† that the Royal Psalmist *set the Lord always before him*,‡ and that our Lord Jesus himself *continued whole nights in prayer to God*.§ Nobody, I believe, will imagine this his prayer, during all the space in which it is said to continue, was altogether *vocal*. When he was in his agony in the garden, he used but a few words; his vocal prayer then consisted only of *one petition*, and an act of pure resignation, thrice repeated: but I hope all will allow, that his devotion lasted longer than while he was employed in uttering a few sentences. Without doubt his holy soul did, both then and at other times which he more especially consecrated to prayer, converse in *silence* with his heavenly Father.—I would humbly advise, that they who are not yet acquainted with this method of prayer, would not run it down or disparage it, but rather piously resolve to make trial of it; for it is only their own experience that can solidly convince them, whether or not, it hath all the advantages to which it pretends.’ Ibid. 212 to 215.

* Gen. v. 24. † Heb. xi. 27. ‡ Psal xvi. 8 § Luke vi 12:

Extracts from the writings of Hannah More.

Prayer is desire. It is an elevation of the soul towards its Maker : a pressing sense of our own ignorance and infirmity, a consciousness of the perfections of God, of his readiness to hear, of his power to help, of his willingness to save.

The preparation of prayer is to live in all those pursuits which we may safely beg of God to bless, and in a conflict with all those temptations into which we pray not to be led.

If God be the centre to which our hearts are tending, every line in our lives must meet in him. With this point in view, there will be a harmony between our prayers and our practice, a consistency between devotion and conduct.

The design of prayer, is not merely to make us devout while we are engaged in it. but that its odour may be diffused through all the intermediate spaces of the day, enter into all its occupations, duties, and tempers.

It is obvious, that the precept to pray without ceasing, can never mean to enjoin a continual course of actual prayer. But while it more directly enjoins us to embrace all proper occasions of performing this sacred duty, so it plainly implies that we should try to keep up constantly that sense of the Divine presence which shall maintain the disposition. In order to this, we should inure our minds to reflection ; we should encourage serious thoughts ; and a good thought must be fixed, or it will produce no practical effect.

On the other hand, if we give the reins to a loose

ungoverned fancy at other times; if we abandon our minds to frivolous thoughts; if we fill them with corrupt images; if we cherish sensual ideas during the rest of the day, can we expect that the "temple into which soul things" have been invited, will be cleansed in a given moment; that worldly thoughts will recede and give place, at once, to pure and holy thoughts? Will that spirit "grieved" by impurity, or "resisted" by levity, return, with its warm beams and cheering influence, to the contaminated mansion from which it has been driven out? We cannot, by retiring into our closets, change our natures as we do our clothes. The disposition we carry thither will be likely to remain with us. We have no right to expect that a new temper will meet us at the door. It is not easy, rather, it is not possible, to graft genuine devotion, on a life of an opposite tendency; nor can we delight ourselves regularly for a few stated moments, in that God whom we have not been serving during the day. We may, indeed, take up the employment of prayer, but cannot take up the state of mind which will make the employment beneficial to ourselves, or the prayer acceptable to God, if all the previous day we have been careless of ourselves, unmindful of our Maker. *They* will not pray differently from the rest of the world, who do not live differently.

Those who are so far conscientious as not to intermit a regular course of devotion, and who yet allow themselves, at the same time, to go on in a course of amusements, which excite a directly opposite spirit, are inconceivably augmenting their own difficulties. They are voluntarily adding to the temptations against which they ask grace to struggle. To acknowledge at the same time, that we

find it hard work to serve God as we ought, and yet to be systematically indulging habits, which must naturally increase the difficulty, makes our characters almost ridiculous, while it renders our duty almost impracticable.

What construction can be put upon that prayer, in which our wants and dependence is acknowledged, our sins confessed, mercy supplicated for, entreaty made for the aid of the Spirit to overcome our many infirmities, and to relinquish our own will, if many of the intervening hours are habitually passed in pursuits of a totally different complexion? Pursuits which raise the very passions we are praying may be allayed. Will the cherished vanities go at our bidding? Will the required dispositions come at our calling? Hence the necessity to believe as we pray; to think as we pray, to feel as we pray, and to act as we pray, otherwise what right have we to expect prayer will be availing.

The habitual tendency of the life, should be the preparation for prayer. Hence he who keeps up an habitual intercourse with his Maker, who is vigilant in thought, self-denying in conduct, and who strives to keep his mind in such a frame, that loving, serving, and pleasing God, maintain their predominant station in the heart,—he may hope to be favoured to witness that simple, solid, pious strain of prayer, in which he does not merely imagine, but feels assured, that God is nigh to him, as a reconciled Father. This is the perfection of prayer.

FINIS.

A

CHRISTIAN MEMENTO:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

OBSERVATIONS

ON SOME OF THE

PREVALENT AMUSEMENTS AND VICES

Of the Present Day.

NO. 5.

SECOND EDITION.

NEW-YORK:

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NO. 372, PEARL-STREET.

1821.

A

CHRISTIAN MEMENTO.



IF use could make a wrong thing harmless, that which is about to be noticed would be no evil at all; since it is hardly possible to travel the public roads, or to pass an hour in the streets of our cities or towns, without being painful witnesses of the sinful practice of taking the holy name of God in vain.

It is the custom of many, on very slight occasions, to use such expressions as these: In the name of God! For God's sake! Good God! Lord have mercy! Lord bless me! and the like. Now all this is wrong. That holy name should never be mentioned but on serious subjects, deliberately, and with fear and reverence. Let us not, by thus abusing it, provoke his displeasure, who intends it for higher purposes, even for his worship and praise: remembering the solemn injunction, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Indeed, had there not been this express command, yet knowing that *holy and reverend is his*

name, "a pious mind," (to use the words of a minister of the Episcopal Church, in an address* to this description of persons,) would naturally be inclined never to express it but for holy purposes, and with reverence.† How then, (continues this writer,) can we account for the frequent use of *God* and *Lord*, and sometimes *Jesus* and *Christ*, by persons that attend the public worship of our church, and hear the third commandment every Sunday? Some who are reckoned religious, not only occasionally use one or more of these sacred names, with the word *good*, as a mere expression of surprise, but seemingly from habit, have adopted a petition of our church service, when uttering their sudden wonder at any uncommon relation, or their concern on hearing of any calamitous event; while at the moment, they not even think of God, nor desire at that time his *mercy*; their thoughts being entirely then engaged by what may have excited their unmeaning exclamation. *These things ought not so to be.* Whence then are they so common? The frequency of taking the name of

* A short Dissuasive from a common Sin, easily avoided, &c.

† Numerous examples might be produced, both from ancient and modern times, of many who have never been favoured with the outward knowledge of the Gospel, that ought to put to the blush the profane conduct of some professors of the Christian name.

Take an instance from amongst those we are pleased to term savages:

"The Cherokees universally believe in the being of a God—they call him the Great Spirit; they mention him with reverence—with them, his attributes are power and goodness. They never profane the name of God in their own language."

Letter from Return J. Meigs, Esq. late representative in Congress, and formerly agent of the United States amongst the Indians. See Freeman's Journal, July 8, 1816.

the Lord our God in vain, cannot be accounted for, in my opinion, but for the want of consideration, and a vital sense of religion."

The author from whom I have quoted, proceeds to point out how "the sin" under examination, "may be easily avoided."

"First," says he, "let this be considered, that, there being neither profit nor pleasure in the commission and practice of this sin, though custom may have introduced the habit, which will require attention and trouble to correct, yet corrupt nature cannot plead any *loss* that can be sustained by a reform.

"Secondly, let relations and friends contribute to check this sin, by reminding each other who may be guilty of it.

"Thirdly, I would impress on the minds of my readers, that whatever steps be adopted as the means conducive to the right discharge of any duty, they should ever be considered as *means only*, which we are bound to take; we should look up to God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, for a blessing on our humble endeavours; and we may be assured, that if we fervently pray for the Divine assistance through Christ, we shall be heard, and become more than earthly conquerors: we shall attain victory over our evil habits, and be enabled to encourage others to imitate our example."

"Some perusers of these pages," adds the author, "may soon forget what has been laid before them, and not recollect the warning given them, till that day when *every idle word shall be brought to judgment*. Others, I hope, may profit by these observations; and if but one guilty person should

attend to what has been said, and be dissuaded from taking the *name of the Lord our God in vain*, I shall think myself rewarded by the knowledge of it, and shall rejoice that my endeavours have not been useless, nor without some salutary effect."

And how lamentably common is it, to swear, *by the name of Jesus and Christ*; also to use the expression, for Christ's sake. Surely we should not thus make use of the name of him who was miraculously announced by the Most High to be his beloved Son; that name of which the Apostle says, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." The man who swears, seems to suppose his veracity doubted, yet this cannot procure credit to an assertion, as it is perhaps oftener used to confirm a rash or doubtful saying, than plain truth.

It is the practice again of some, to assert or deny, to jest or wrangle, with imprecations upon themselves, so shocking to a Christian mind, that we are not disposed to pollute these pages by reciting instances, which are too familiar to every one, the general purport of which is a desire to be damned; to be forever separated from God and goodness, from light and hope, and the society of the blessed. No man in his senses could seriously call down on his own head such dreadful vengeance. Then why do it in thoughtless levity? Can this be the part of a rational being?

There is yet another sinful practice; it is to curse others: to fix upon them in words, and sometimes it is to be feared, too nearly in wish, this same damnation.

But is it becoming a noble and generous mind, to wish even the bitterest enemy in that dreadful

state, from which, could we see him in it, and be sensible of the woes we had inflicted, we would instantly become willing to give our all to redeem him ?

How can that soul be qualified to beg for mercy of its Judge, who feels in itself a disposition to curse a fellow-creature ?

Some may be disposed to plead in extenuation of this evil practice, that they have had such provocation as was too much for human nature to bear : but let such remember, that our blessed Redeemer, in his memorable sermon on the mount, gave this positive injunction, " Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

The Scriptures assure us, that " If the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return unto the Lord, he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, he will abundantly pardon."* Again, " Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil, learn to do well," &c. And, " Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."†

Reader, mayst thou be so wise for thyself, as no longer to slight or reject such gracious offers of divine love and mercy. Hast thou not felt the strivings of His spirit‡ in thy own heart and conscience, secretly condemning thee for thy evil words and actions, and heard him, as " a word be-

* Isa. lv. 7.

† Isa. i. 16. 18.

‡ Gen. vi. 3.

hind thee," saying, "this is the way, walk in it, when thou turnest to the right hand or to the left?"
 * Yea, when thou hast sworn profanely or falsely by his name, has he not been in thy conscience as a reprover,† and a swift witness against thee?† 'Turn then, unto God, through the Spirit of his Son, Jesus Christ, whom he has graciously sent to bless thee, in turning thee from thy iniquities,§ so shalt thou know thy sins to be blotted out, when the times of refreshing come from His presence;|| and as thou art concerned to walk before Him in holy fear, thou wilt know Him to lead thee into newness of life, and purity of conversation, whereby alone thou canst serve Him acceptably, and become fitted to enjoy the company of saints and angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, through the endless ages of a glorious eternity.

* Isa. xxx. 20. 21. † Psalm l. 21. ‡ Mal. iii. 5, and Isa. lv. 4.
 § Acts iii. 26. || Acts iii. 19.

*Observations on some of the prevalent Amusements
and Vices of the present day.*

MEN discover their taste in nothing more plainly, than in their choice of amusements. It is easy to know what these are, and what is adapted to the corrupt taste of the carnal mind. Worldly men are never so much in their element as when engaged in them: and they will even sacrifice their most important interests, in order to enjoy them. Among these amusements, Gambling holds a distinguished rank.—The rage for deep play, and particularly for cards, is a prominent feature in the character of the present age. How frequently, when we go into company, especially in winter evenings, are cards introduced to spend the time. Alas! our time is short enough, and will die of itself; we need not haste its exit. “Our days are as an handbreadth, and our age is nothing.” We complain of the shortness of life, and yet labour to reduce its narrow span.—Does it become a rational creature to *kill* that, which is naturally so short-lived, and so valuable in itself? Is it not more worthy of such a being to *improve* time by applying it to some useful purposes? Will it not turn to a better account in the hour of death and in the day of judgment, to employ that portion of time which is usually murdered by card-playing, in profitable reading or edifying discourse, or in some other way

by which the general welfare may be promoted? The passionate fondness of the basest characters, for this amusement is sufficient to create a suspicion of its propriety and lawfulness. Is not this game known to have a fascinating effect on the mind, especially when money is staked? Can it deserve the name of relaxation, and does it tend to promote either mental or bodily vigour, while it so deeply engages the heart, and engrosses the attention? It is not too much to assert, that gaming ravishes the passions, which it is our duty and real interest to suppress. Anger, deceit, and dishonesty, may be reckoned its vile produce. It has beggared thousands, and really enriches none. Anxiety of mind, neglect of business, drunkenness, poverty, theft, and suicide, are in its train. It deserves the severest reprobation from every serious man and good citizen.

“Mr. Locke having been introduced by lord Shaftesbury to the duke of Buckingham and lord Halifax, these three noblemen, instead of conversing with the philosopher, as might naturally have been expected, on literary subjects, in a very short time, sat down to cards. Mr. Locke, after looking on for some time, pulled out his pocket-book, and began to write with great attention. One of the company observing this, took the liberty of asking him what he was writing. “My lord,” says Locke, “I am endeavouring, as far as possible, to profit by my present situation; for having waited with impatience for the honour of being in company with the great geniuses of the age, I thought I could do nothing better than to write down your conversation: and, indeed, I have set down the substance of what you have said for this hour or two.” This

well-timed ridicule had its desired effect, and these noblemen, fully sensible of its force, immediately quitted their play, and entered into a conversation more rational, and better suited to the dignity of their characters.

"I think it very wonderful," says Addison, "to see persons of the best sense, passing away a dozen hours together in shuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other conversation but what is made of a few game-phrases, and no other ideas but those of black or red spots, ranged together in different figures. Would not a man laugh to hear one of this species complaining that life is short?"

The pernicious consequences of play have been frequently described in the strongest terms, and illustrated by the most striking examples. Seldom, however, have they been represented on so large a scale, as in the late account of the fate of a *great body of gamesters* at Hamburg, which an intelligent spectator has published in a German gazette, as the result of his attentive examination, during a period of two years. *Of six hundred individuals*, who were in the habit of frequenting gaming-houses, he states, that *nearly one half*, not only lost considerable sums, but were finally stripped of all means of subsistence, and ended their days by self-murder. Of the rest, not less than a hundred finished their career by becoming swindlers, or robbers on the highway. The remnant of this unfortunate group perished; some by apoplexy; but the greater part by chagrin and despair.

Dancing is another sinful amusement of the present age. The dancing of both sexes, and especially in public places, is highly pleasing to the world, but extremely dangerous to good morals.

The gaiety it inspires, the company into which it leads, and various evils connected with it, render it every way unbecoming the Christian ; who has the utmost need to cultivate seriousness and gravity, and to live and act as a pilgrim and a stranger. There is scarcely any thing, not absolutely and notoriously wicked, in which conformity to the world consists more, than the amusement of the ball-room. Not a few have been called out of it into eternity ; but where is the person who would wish when summoned to the bar of God, to be found so employed ?

There are many other sinful amusements, in which wicked men take pleasure. There is one grand rule applicable to them all, and which may afford a pretty good test of their propriety or impropriety. You will find this Apostolic direction in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, third chapter, and seventeenth verse, " Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed—do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father, by him."



Theatrical and other vain Amusements.

PLAYS and Romances not only indispose the soul for all acts of religion and piety, but they give it a disgust, in some measure, to all serious and ordinary actions. Those deceive themselves extremely, who think that Plays make no ill impression on them, because they do not find them excite any formed evil desire. There are many degrees

before one comes to an entire corruption of mind, and it is always extremely hurtful to the soul, to destroy the ramparts which secured it from temptation. Archbishop Tillotson, on the subject of Plays, says, "They are intolerable, and not fit to be permitted in a civilized, much less a Christian nation. They do most notoriously minister to vice and infidelity. By their profaneness, they are apt to instil bad principles into the minds of men, and to lessen that awe and reverence which all men ought to have of God and religion; and by their lewdness they teach vice, and are apt to infect the minds of men, and dispose them to lewd and dissolute practices." Chief Justice Hale also says, "Beware of too much recreation.—Gaming, taverns, and plays, are pernicious, and corrupt youth. If they had no other fault, they are justly to be declined, in respect to their excessive expense of time, and habituating men to idleness, vain thoughts, and disturbing passions, when they are past, as well as while they are used."

A pious and eminent writer on the subject of theatrical amusements, says, "May we never be imposed on by the common, but delusive sentiments, that moral and religious improvement is to be acquired from such impure mixtures; and that the literary merit, and accurate knowledge of the human heart, which are displayed in many parts of dramatic works, will atone for the fatal wounds which conscience, delicacy, and religion, too frequently suffer from these performances."

FINIS,

THE
PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE
OF WAR,

COMPARED

With the Precepts and Example

OF

CHRIST,

MOSTLY EXTRACTED FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.

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ON WAR.

"From whence come Wars and Fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" This was the language of the apostle James; and it remains to be the truth to the present day. The attendant evils, and the direful effects of war are too numerous to be portrayed in a small compass. Pregnant as it is, with all that is subversive of the happiness of man, it is deeply to be deplored that such should be the depravity of human nature, as to induce a practice so evidently repugnant to the principles of Christianity, which, in the glorious anthem sung at the birth of Christ, breathes the language of "glory to God in the highest, on earth Peace, and good will to men." The holy Scriptures emphatically speak of the Divine Being, as wholly complete in himself, and in his attributes. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Christianity is calculated to enlighten the understanding, and inculcate the principles of love to God and man. It softens the heart and disposes it to acts of beneficence and good will—it forbids all manner of revenge, animosity and resentment; and enjoins the cultivation of that charity, which thinketh no evil—consequently, it is opposed to those tempers and dispositions which engender War, and cause so much desolation in the earth. To love and pray for enemies, and to "do good for evil," are permanent features in the Christian character; from all which it may be inferred, that Wars and Fightings, under whatever pretext they may originate, are repugnant to the doctrines of the gospel—contrary to reason and the dictates of humanity, and productive of incalculable misery to the human family.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF WAR, &c.

WAR PRINCIPLES.

THE principle on which war is generally founded, is, to revenge some wrong already received, to prevent some intended injury, to enlarge their dominions, or to aggrandize those in authority.

The rules for conducting war, may be summed up as follows:—When rulers are about to make war, they may employ every artifice to rouse the passions of their subjects, and excite enmity against their brethren of another nation. They may, by seduction, or conscription, collect armies. They may establish martial laws, and military discipline, which the soldiers, many of them deluded into the service, shall be deprived of the rights of men, degraded to the condition of slaves, and exposed to the most inhuman punishments. They may also inspire these soldiers with a thirst for conquest and military glory, for plunder and for blood.

They may send forth their armies to invade

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES.

“AND Jesus seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and taught, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that

mourn; for they shall be comforted.—Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.—Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.—Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.—Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.—Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.—Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.—You have heard that it hath

province from which they have been said, thou shalt love never received any wrong from thy neighbour and hate. They may spread terror, thine enemy ; but I say havock, and wo in every direction unto you, love your enemies. They may curse you, bless them that plunder and destroy their property, and load them with intolerable contributions, only because they are under the government of the nation they are at war with, even tho' thousands of miles distant from it.

They may grant commissions to private citizens to fit out privateers to capture property from innocent, peaceable men, who have had no hand in the war, and perhaps are ignorant of it. They may not only take their property, but lives if they think it necessary.

They may burn towns, villages or cities, even in their own territories, if deemed necessary to their own security, or to the accomplishment of their purposes ; and thus reduce thousands of families to indigence and sufferings, and expose them to hunger and cold. They may take by storm one city after another, and as incentives to desperate valour, they may hold out the encourage-

ment, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy ; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven ; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.—Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.—If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.—All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.—Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.—Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built

ragement of a licensed his house upon a rock :
plunder, dissipation and And the rain descended,
debauchery. On their en- and the floods came, and
tering a stormed city, the the winds blew, and beat
distressed inhabitants are upon that house ; and it
exposed to the unbridled fell not : for it was founded
rage, rapacity and lust of upon a rock.

a ferocious army ; the And every one that
houses and the streets may heareth these sayings of
be filled with massacre, mine, and *doeth them not*,
blood, violation and death, shall be likened unto a
and every species of dis- foolish man, which built
tress, crime and horror. his house upon the sand ;

They may constantly and the rain descended,
employ spies, and yet beat upon that house, and
hang every spy taken in it fell, and great was the
their own camps. If one fall of it."

of their own countrymen Now behold his example
proves a traitor, or one of set for us to follow.—His
their soldiers a deserter, life was spent in doing good
if taken, death is his fate, to all classes of people.—He

But yet they may seduce died praying for his perse-
the inhabitants of the in- cutors : " Father forgive
waded territory to violate them ; for they know not
their oath of allegiance, what they do.—Learn of me,
and to take up arms against for I am meek and lowly in
their own government.—heart," was the emphatic

They may bribe officers to language to his then follow-
betray their trust, to vio- ers ; and which has lost
late their most sacred obli- none of its force by the
gations, and expose men lapse of time.

under their care, to be Apostolic language is—
slaughtered or taken cap- " Recompense to no man
tive. They may retaliate evil for evil."

injuries, by inflicting the " Dearly beloved, avenge
greatest evils on persons not yourselves, but give
who are perfectly inno- place unto wrath."

cent in regard to the of- " The weapons of our
sences for which they suf- warfare are not carnal, but
fer. spiritual."

After all this, a day may be appointed to celebrate victories, and to give thanks to the Father of all, for the havoc which they made among his children. There is good, both among your crimes that have been committed may be veiled with a cloud of military splendour, and the world resound with the praises of military glory.

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.”

“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men.”

“God hath called us to peace.”

“Live in peace, and the God of all peace shall be with you.”

All these things have been, and may be done, without violating any of the laws and usages of war, which have been established among nations professing the religion of the Prince of Peace.

“The gospel is the gospel of peace.”

“The servant of the Lord must not strive.”

“Be diligent to be found of him in peace without spot and blameless.”

But in order to reconcile the conduct of rulers who profess the christian religion, and yet make and encourage war, it has been asserted, that the precepts of Christ relate only to individuals in private life; that rulers can neither preserve order at home, nor protect their people from foreign insult and injury, without occasional recourse to vindictive measures. But from whence do they get this indulgence? Is there any thing in our Saviour's doctrine or example that affords a pretext for such a conclusion?

Not only rulers are to be governed by vindictive passions in time of war; but the great mass of population must be wrought up to contemplate with pleasure the anguish and desolation of a reputed enemy; to rejoice in the destruction of his property, and even the shedding of his blood. An army without these dispositions will not answer the object of their rulers.

Of what avail are the rules of the gospel to an army, and people who indulge these ferocious sentiments? They cannot be excused because they consider their

consciences to be in the keeping of others, and they thereby not responsible to a higher power; they must therefore have an awful account to give at the tribunal of eternal justice.

But are christians to relinquish the peaceful, forbearing, benevolent spirit of their Master, the moment they are called to act in a corporate capacity? Are they no sooner to move in public stations, and be clothed with public authority, than the consideration of the public welfare is essentially to change their duties? to justify a forsaking of all the feelings and habits which the gospel requires, and adopting those of an opposite nature, if a supposed advantage to the community can be obtained by it?

Deep rooted depravity, and lasting wretchedness flow from admitting that the general welfare may, in any case, warrant men in dispensing with the meekness, humility, and love, peculiar to the followers of Christ.

What the duty of a christian individual is to his neighbour, or his enemy, the same must be the duty of one christian nation to another. If pride, wrath, ambition, revenge and murder, are sinful in an individual; must they not be equally so in a nation composed of these individuals?

A distinction between political expediency, and christian duty, is dangerous in the extreme; not founded in truth, and of pernicious tendency to morality. Truly, if the command to love enemies; to do good for evil, does not extend to political bodies of christians, all consistency is at an end; individual responsibility for conduct will be taken from man; crimes clearly marked and defined in the Bible, will cease to be crimes at the will of rulers; and men will have two different standards of morality; one, the commands of the gospel; the other, the orders of government, or customs of the world. But, be it remembered, that no orders of government, nor customs of the world, can ever take away individual responsibility at the awful tribunal of retributive justice.

OF WAR we may safely affirm, without fear of its being contradicted by future inquiries, that it is the "greatest practical evil" that has ever been popular among men. "Measuring its magnitude by its crimes and sufferings," it is the grossest delusion, the most dreadful scourge, and the greatest curse that ever afflicted the race of Adam. Yet to this sanguinary custom, the greater portion of the human family pay homage and afford support. By this delusion it is probable that more human beings have been sacrificed, than twice the present population of the world. But still war has its advocates even among the professed disciples of the benevolent Messiah.

Nay, have not ministers of religion—and men eminent for learning and piety—been so bewildered by the popularity of war, as to lend their names, their talents, and their influence to give celebrity to this most fatal of all delusions? Have they not in one breath justly extolled Christianity, as prohibiting all injustice, revenge, and every species of cruelty—as requiring of all its votaries the spirit of meekness, forbearance, forgiveness and universal good will;—in another breath, have they not justified the custom of war, which involves all the vices and crimes that the gospel forbids, and sets at nought every virtue which the gospel requires? While on the one hand they have exhibited the mild and benignant character of our Saviour, as worthy of universal esteem and imitation; have they not on the other eulogized the characters and destructive exploits of military men, whose temper and conduct formed a perfect contrast to what they had commended in the Prince of Peace? And of men, too, who had nothing to recommend them but the display of eminent talents in spreading desolation, death and wo, among their brethren?

Let it not however be imagined that these remarks are made to cast reproach on christianity or its real friends. This is not their object; and christianity is no more answerable for the wars of professing christians, than the laws of this state are for the instances of robbery and murder by which they are violated. The object is to state things clearly and pointedly, in order to lead all

stians to reflect on the awful apostacy from christian principles, as laid down by Christ himself, and to awaken all a spirit of inquiry and reformation.

The palpable darkness relating to war, which has so overspread the christian world, and the strong prepossessions which still exist in its favour, have rendered needful to strip the custom of its delusive glories, and display its crimes and horrors in the clearest light.— so long as the predominating influence in Christendom shall be in favour of war, “darkness will cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.”

It is enough to fill the mind of any reflecting man with horror, to think of the millions of his fellow men that have been sacrificed to the ambition, the avarice, the violence, or the profligacy of ungodly rulers. How striking the thought, of armies meeting under the influence of enmity, artificially excited, to plunge their bayonets in the breasts of each other ; and thus to offer sacrifices by thousands, to some idolized phantom of ambition or revengeful men ! The soldiers on each side often fight without ever having experienced the least injury from each other ; with no enmity but what has been artificially excited, any more than they had in time of peace. Yet by art are they inspired with enmity,

made to thirst for each other's blood, and to perish in each other's hands. A more barbarous mode of offering human sacrifices was never practised by the most savage nations ; nor one, it is believed, more abhorrent in the eyes of heaven.

The demoralizing effects of war cannot be too seriously considered. We have heard much of the corrupting tendency of some of the rites and customs of the heathen ; what custom of the heathen nations has had a greater effect in depraving the human character than that of war ? What is that feeling usually called a war spirit, but a compound of enthusiastic ardour, ambition, malignity, revenge ? a compound which as really endangers the soul of the possessor, as the life of his enemy. Who, a person deranged or deluded, would think it safe to go into the presence of his Judge with his heart boiling

with enmity, and his brother's blood dripping from his hands! Yet in time of war, how much pains is taken to excite and maintain this blood-thirsty disposition?

The profession of a soldier exposes him to sudden untimely death, and at the same time hardens his heart and renders him regardless of his final account. When a person goes into the army, it is expected of him that he will rise above the fear of death. In doing this he too commonly loses the fear of God, and all serious concern for his soul.

When a war is declared for the redress of some wrong in regard to property, if nothing but property be brought into consideration, the result is not commonly better than spending five hundred dollars in a lawsuit to recover a debt of ten. But when we come to estimate human life against dollars and cents, how are we confounded! "What hath a man that he will give for his life?" Yet, by the custom of war, men are so deluded, that a ruler may sacrifice fifty or a hundred thousand lives, when only a trifling amount of property is in question, and when the probabilities are as ten to one against him, that even that amount will be secured by the contest. It must however again be remembered, that war-makers do not usually give their *own lives*, but the *lives of others*.—How often has a war been declared with a prospect that not more than 50,000 lives must be sacrificed; and while the agents in making the war, would not any one of them have given his own life, to secure to the nation a thing that was claimed from the other government. Are rulers to be upheld in thus gambling away the lives of others? Does it not appear that they regard the lives of soldiers as mere property which they may sacrifice at pleasure?

If by the custom of war rulers learn to undervalue the lives of their own subjects, how much more do they undervalue the lives of their enemies? they learn to bid the death of thousands after thousands on the side of the enemy with joy and exultation.

If in a battle 500 of their own men lose their lives.

umph. This time they have been successful. But alas! at what expense to others! This expense, however, does not interrupt the joy of war-makers.

How soon does an *army* learn to undervalue not only the lives of their enemies, but even their own lives: and will often wantonly rush into the arms of death, for the sake of that phantom called military glory. And according to the frequency of battles, and duration of war, does an undervaluing of human life, and a want of feeling for the distressed, more or less prevail in a nation.

What is our boast of civilization, while we tolerate as popular and justifiable, the most horrid custom which ever resulted from human wickedness?

We regard with horror the custom of the ancient heathens in offering their children in sacrifice to idols. We read with astonishment of the sacrifices made in the papal crusades, and in the Mahometan, and Hindoo pilgrimages. We are shocked with the customs of the Hindoos, in prostrating themselves before the car of an idol to be crushed to death; in burning women alive on the funeral piles of their husbands; in offering a monthly sacrifice, by casting living children into the Ganges to be drowned. But that which is fashionable and popular in any country is generally esteemed right and honourable, whatever may be its nature in the views of men better informed.

But should the Hindoos become acquainted with Christ's sermon on the mount, and be informed that Christians professed to be governed by its precepts, of "loving enemies;" "doing good for evil;" and that they laid claim to the blessings announced to the merciful, and the peace-makers; would they not have just cause to be more shocked at our horrid custom of slaughtering each other in war, by thousands and millions, than we have to censure them in their customs, which, though barbarous, their religion sanctions, and they doubtless suppose it requires? whilst the religion we profess is expressly against our inhuman custom of butchering each other? We regard the Algerines as barbarians, pirates, robbers, and murderers, because their modes of warfare are in some respects different from those adopted by

Christian nations; but these barbarians have their customs as well as other people; and they can plead that their inhuman practices are not only authorized by their rulers, but by their religion. Their mode of warfare and their making slaves of other nations is, indeed, abominable inhumanity; but can Christians plead not guilty in either case?

That we may obtain a clear view of the delusions of war, let us look back at the origin of society.—Suppose a man to commence the settlement of a country. After a lapse of time, he dies, and leaves two sons with families; they multiply into a number of distinct families; and in the course of years they become so numerous, as to form distinct governments. In any stage of their progress disputes might arise.—Now, at what period would it be proper to introduce the custom of deciding controversies by an appeal to arms? Might this be done by the two families? Surely not; unless we justify duelling.—Might it be done when the families had increased to ten? Who would not be shocked at the madness of introducing such a custom under such circumstances? Might it then with more propriety be done when the families had multiplied to fifty, to an hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand? The greater the number, the greater the danger, the greater the calamity and carnage. Besides, what reason can be given, why this mode of deciding controversies would not be as proper when there were but two, or ten families, as when there were ten thousand?

Perhaps all will admit that the custom could not be honourably introduced until they separated, and formed two, or more distinct governments. But would this change of circumstances dissolve their ties as brethren of the same parent, lessen their love as Christians, or cancel their obligations as accountable beings? Would the organization of distinct governments confer a right on rulers to appeal to arms for the settlement of controversies? Is it not manifest, that no period can be assigned, at which the introduction of such a custom would not as absolutely be murder, as was Cain's killing Abel?

but, from whence do rulers derive their power to act, in a republican government? Is it not from the people? If not, what is it? If it is, have the people a right to take their own lives, or the lives of others? If not, which I conceive will be readily granted by all, they cannot then have transferred their lives, or the lives of others, to the disposal of rulers, to be deprived of them at their pleasure.—What authority then do rulers make war, and calculate upon thousands being slaughtered by it?

A man may transfer to others a right to control his person, and to regulate his conduct; and for these he may receive an equivalent: but what equivalent can he give for his life? Man's life, therefore, is his own to preserve, but not to transfer, or destroy. His life, his liberty, his science, and day of probation, are unalienable.

A plain case will therefore be stated, which has often occurred:—in which rulers have exercised a power over the laws of God and lives of men.

The dominions of two governments are separated only by a geographical line. Numerous settlements are made adjacent to the line on each side; and the people of the two states live together as neighbours, friends, and brothers. They often meet in the same house of worship, some members of the same religious society; intermarriages are frequent; the sons on one side purchase lands and settle on the other; and in a multitude of instances they become united, endeared, and attached to each other.

The next news is, a dispute has arisen between the two governments. An ambassador has been insulted, or a question of property, or of a boundary line, has occurred. The dispute is managed in a haughty menacing manner on one side, and thus retorted on the other. Next, comes a flaming manifesto, or declaration of war, or, in other words, a sweeping *death-warrant*, which involves the innocent with the guilty, and friends with foes.—The peaceful inhabitants, on the different sides of the line, are declared to be enemies to each other; they are required to take up arms, and meet each other in the field of battle, neighbour against neighbour, brother against

brother, and father against son. All the means which malice can suggest, or ingenuity invent, are adopted, to inflame their passions, alienate their hearts, excite their enmity, and make them forget they are friends and brethren. They must fight, or be punished as traitors or cowards. They must kill or be killed, and perhaps both.

Now the laws of God are superseded by the declaration of war—theft is no longer considered stealing, nor killing murder. Nay, it is now declared to be just and honourable to plunder and to kill; and he who proves to be the most hardened and successful, acquires the greatest share of renown. After years of mutual havoc and desolation, the sound of peace is heard by those who happen to be alive. The people are required to cease from slaughter; and killing again becomes murder, by the mere mandate of rulers.

We may boldly and solemnly ask, who gave these rulers power to suspend the laws of God, during the war, and thus to sacrifice the lives of men? Who gave them a right to change the relations of these citizens from friends and neighbours to political enemies? Who authorized the rulers to inflame their subjects with enmity, and to arm them for mutual havoc and murder?

Must not that ruler be under strong delusions, or perfect insanity, who can suppose that a mandate from himself can dissolve the obligations which men are under to love one another, or absolve them from guilt in shedding innocent blood? Can rational beings be so infatuated by a popular custom, as to suppose, that the mere word of a fallible, and perhaps ungodly ruler, is of sufficient force to suspend the laws and authority of God; so as to render that honourable to-day, which yesterday would have been wanton cruelty, and deliberate murder? that too without any change in the character or condition of the subjects, but what the ruler himself has made!

Either rulers have such a power, or they have not.—If they possess this power, then killing during war, and in obedience to the order of the ruler, is not murder. But if they have not power to supersede the command,

"*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*," then these acts of killing, and every murderous passion, must be condemned at the bar of God.

To support the sanguinary custom of war, rulers are obliged to adopt sanguinary laws, which expose the lives of their own citizens. Cowardice in an officer exposes him to death. Here a capital crime is made out of mere natural infirmity. Desertion is also punished with death, whether in consequence of ill usage, abuse from officers, or other causes. And yet the officers of an army will bribe or entice the soldiers of the opposite army to desert.

If desertion does not deserve death, the ruler who inflicts the punishment is guilty of unjustly taking human life. If he views the crime as deserving of death, and still will entice others to commit it, what is he but a deluded or an unprincipled mortal.

Similar to this is the custom of punishing and employing spies. Each army will employ spies. And yet if a spy from one army is detected by the other, death is his portion. Now it is a question, which God will decide, whether that ruler who will both employ a spy and punish a spy with death, is not chargeable with blood guiltiness, and the most glaring inconsistency.

In a word, fraud and falsehood, robbery and murder, impiety and injustice, which God forbids, are authorized by the maxims and usages of war. That love and kindness, which God requires, the custom of war prohibits; and that hatred, violence and revenge, which God forbids, the custom of war requires.

Unless the laws of nations, the maxims of war, and the authority of rulers, are sufficient to subvert the authority of God, and change vice into virtue, the customs of war must incur the most awful retributions. For it is manifest that both rulers and subjects do act on the presumption that a declaration of war can authorize the most flagrant violations of the moral law, and the benevolent precepts of the gospel.

Now let us trace the advantages to nations produced by war.

Frederick the 2d, King of Prussia, in three volumes

written by himself, has given a history of the wars in which he was personally concerned. At the close of his 3d volume, he gave the result of a seven years war, an abridgment of which is as follows :

" Prussia enumerated a hundred and eighty thousand men whom she had been deprived of by the war."	
" Her armies had fought 16 pitched battles,"	180 000
" The Russian troops had fought four grand battles, and it was computed that the war cost them 120,000 men,"	120,000
" Austria had fought ten regular battles : they estimated their loss at 140,000 men."	140,000
" The French made their losses amount to 200,000,"	200,000
" The English with their allies to 160,000,"	160,000
" The Swedes, to 25,000,"	25,000
" The troops of the circles to 28,000,"	28,000
<hr/>	
Total, 853,000	

" At the close of the war, the house of Austria found itself a hundred millions of crowns in debt."

" In France, the credit of government had been ruined by the robberies of financiers, and the malversions of those to whom the administration of money had been committed."

" The English, victorious by sea, may be said to have purchased their conquests by immense sums which they had borrowed to carry on the war."

" Russia had expended considerable sums : but she had rather made war at the expense of the Prussians and the Poles, than at her own."

" Sweden was on the verge of bankruptcy."

" Prussia had suffered the most."

" Time," the king adds, " which cures and effaces all ills, will no doubt soon restore the Prussian states to their former abundance, prosperity and splendour. Other powers will in like manner recover, and other ambitious men will arise, excite new wars, and incur new disasters. Such are the properties of the human mind ; no man benefits by example ; the follies of the father afford no useful lessons to the son ; each generation must have its errors."—Vol. 3, p. 370, 375.

What must be thought of the understandings of mankind who can attach glory to such insane, bloody, and destructive enterprises? In addition to the immense waste of property, and the incalculable amount of pain and wretchedness suffered by the millions of human beings who were wounded or bereaved, more than 850 thousand lives were sacrificed, to gratify the pride or revenge of a few mad princes and generals.

Within the last forty years, a thorough experiment has been made of the war policy, as a means of national security and prosperity. In the course of the experiment, every government in Christendom has been made to tremble to its very foundation—several governments have been demolished—new ones have been formed in their stead—and these again have been annihilated, and the old re-established. Five millions of human beings have probably been sacrificed—a thousand millions of property expended or destroyed—an indescribable amount of suffering and wretchedness endured, and each nation left under the pressure of an enormous debt.

It has been recently stated in the American Congress, that in the late war 17,000 of our fellow men were killed in battle, or died in military service. What number perished on the part of Great Britain, we are not informed. Nor the amount of debt government has been loaded with, in consequence of the war.

With how little apparent concern such accounts are stated, read and heard, is truly astonishing. The casual oversetting of a stage or ferry-boat, and consequent death of two or three members of congress, would probably be stated, read and heard, with greater emotion and sympathy, except by the near relations of the victims of war.

What did America gain by the war, to place in the balance against the loss of so many brethren? Or, that will weigh in the opposite scale to a single life? Let the reader imagine his own life to be the one, and then answer the question.

How will professed Christian rulers be able to answer for such conduct at the tribunal of a righteous God?

There is such a perfect contrast between the maxims

of the gospel and the maxims of war, that we feel amazed and confounded when we reflect, that for ages the great body of the clergy have justified the most sanguinary custom that ever existed among men. How would the compassionate Saviour have appeared at the head of an army, pronouncing violent declamations, to excite men to revenge and havoc? Or, how would the apostles Peter and Paul have appeared as chaplains in two opposite armies, about to engage in the work of vengeance and murder? How opposite this, to the spirit of the command of our Saviour, "love your enemies;"—and to his prayer on the cross. "Father forgive them;" and to Paul's injunction, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

We turn away with horror from such a supposition. And yet, wonderful to relate, some of the professed ambassadors of Christ, teach, that the followers of Jesus may, in obedience to his gospel, meet each other in the field of battle for mutual violence and slaughter. And that they, as his gospel ministers, may pray on each side to the Father of mercies, to grant them success in their attempts to butcher one another. How astonishing, that this monstrous error, like the "camel" of the pharisees, has been swallowed by almost every sect of Christians; and that too, while each has been careful to strain at some apprehended "gnat" of error in the theological belief of the other!

We have many melancholy proofs of the moral blindness and depravity of mankind; but the popularity of war among Christians, who have the New Testament in their hands, crowns the whole: and leaves no room for doubt. "Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known."

But it is argued in support of wars, that they were permitted to the Jews; and, as man is *essentially* the same through all generations, and God is the same yesterday, to day, and forever, and the image of God on the soul of man is at all times and places of the same character; that war therefore cannot have been forbidden by him who once authorized it.

not disposed to deny the lawfulness of any war expressly commanded by God. But I may deduce a special command or permission of God, in a particular case, will authorize another people, under different circumstances, to make war without such command or permission. Some of the wars of the Israelites, which were authorized by God, were strictly offensive. And Christians in general of this age are ready to admit, offensive war is unlawful and murderous. But if we see war among Christians, on the ground that God commanded the Israelites to make war, we may as safely call them offensive as defensive wars. Therefore this argument proves too much, or it proves nothing.

In some of the wars of the Israelites against the surrounding nations, God's command to them was, *shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.*" Will a Christian of this age, justify rulers in making and fighting a war on this principle? If not, let him beware of the danger of pleading the example of *Jewish* wars to justify *Christian* wars.

Mosaic code, besides sanctioning war, embraced laws in which the penalty of transgression was death.

Some of which no Christian nation feels authorized to adopt. A few of these laws will be exhibited.

He that smiteth his Father or his Mother, shall be put to death.—Ex. xxi, 15.

He that stealeth a man and selleth him, shall be put to death.—Ex. xxi, 16.

He that curseth his Father or his Mother, shall be put to death.—Ex. xxi, 17.

Whosoever doeth any work on the Sabbath day, surely be put to death.—Ex. xxxi, 15.

The adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.—Lev. xx, 10.

Of any guilty of idolatry, it is written, "Then shall ye bring forth that man or that woman—and shalt smite them with stones till they die."—Deut. xvii, 2, 5.

The mild, forbearing, forgiving spirit of the gospel is inconsistent with these Jewish laws? Surely not, without a special revelation from the Author of life, must every Christian

say. Hence the argument founded on Jewish practice, to justify war under the gospel without a similar command, is not to the point, and is inconclusive.

That the gospel covenant is more perfect, and was designed to make men more perfect, than the Mosaic, no intelligent Christian will deny; "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." "But Christ is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."—Heb. viii, 6 and 7, He was emphatically the light of the world; and the light by him as far surpasses the light by Moses, as the light of the sun exceeds that of the moon. Yet all the light by Moses, and by the Messiah, proceeded from the same source—"the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

It was the duty of the Israelites to walk before God, according to the light and precepts by Moses: and Christians are under as great obligations to walk according to the light and precepts by Jesus Christ. And we may as rationally ask, why God did not send the Messiah as early as he sent Moses, as why retaliation of injuries was permitted to the Israelites, and prohibited to Christians. Let it then be granted, that "man is essentially the same through all generations"—and that "God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Still it is a fact, that the state of society has been changed; the Mosaic covenant has been superseded by that of the gospel, by which we are required to be, in word and in deed, in temper and in practice, the followers of the Prince of Peace.

Many things were, by the Mosaic law, enjoined on the Jews, that were not on the Gentile nations. Many are enjoined on Christians that were not on the Jews. It would have been unjustifiable in the Israelites to have adopted heathen customs forbidden by their law. Is it not equally so for Christians to descend to Jewish practices in opposition to their new commands of a higher nature? Commands that appertain to the gospel dispensation, when swords are to be beaten into ploughshares, and men are not to learn war any more.

May all Christians "so walk even as Christ walked"—and love one another as he has loved them ; then will Christianity appear in its true light ; the havoc and horrors of war will be banished ; and Christendom will be no longer a vast slaughter-house for human butchery.

But some say, if these pacific principles prevail, our lives will be in danger ; our liberties and civil rights will be torn from us, and we shall become a prey to every invader. Surely not, unless the Lord hath forsaken the earth and forgotten his people.—"Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe," saith the Psalmist — "Not a sparrow is forgotten before God. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore ; ye are of more value than many sparrows." This is the encouraging language of the Messiah. When the ways of a nation are such as to please the Lord, he can without recourse to miracles, so order events that even their enemies shall be at peace with them. The promise to the Jews verifies this—"Thrice in the year shall your males appear before the Lord, (in Jerusalem,) neither shall any man desire your land, when ye shall go up to appear before the Lord your God thrice in the year."

A striking instance of the effects of a reliance on Providential protection, instead of warlike measures, is exemplified in the settlement of Pennsylvania. Its first European inhabitants were principled against fighting. They accordingly did not provide themselves with any weapons of defence, though surrounded by nations of warlike Indians ; among whom they lived in peace and harmony, during the time they had the reins of government in their hands, which was about seventy years.—While the neighbouring Provinces on each side of them, who armed and fortified, were involved in almost continual warfare with the natives.

But whatever may be our situation in life, in no case can it be justifiable to sin, to avoid calamity ; or to do evil, that good may come. To those therefore who profess allegiance to the Prince of Peace, I would here address some serious questions. Do you not perceive that the doctrine of peace and nonresistance is taught, in the

plainest manner, by the Saviour of the world, and corroborated by his example?—"Do good to them that hate you!—Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"—What Christian can evade the force of these sentiments?—What sophistry can reconcile them to the principles of war?—Shall we then, my brethren uphold this murderous custom, which makes man the foe of man? And do we not, by so doing, demonstrate that we have mistaken the hope of our calling, and have not fixed our eye steadfastly upon that inheritance which fadeth not away? Do we not thus proclaim to the world, that we have not the spirit of Christ, and that we have no confidence in the God of our salvation? Can we not safely confide the keeping of our life to him who "giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things? Are we afraid to risk the consequences of obedience to his injunctions? And shall we plead the customs of the world which lieth in wickedness, against the voice of God from Heaven! Must Christians lean upon the sword and trust in the arm of flesh, till all disposition to invade their rights shall cease? Must Christians breathe the spirit of vengeance till offences shall be done away?—so, *when*, or *how* shall wars cease to the end of the world? Must Christians renounce all trust in God, and act the part of bloody men, lest they perish by bloody hands? If this be the path of duty and safety, let us renounce the gospel, and become consistent in profession and practice that we may not be continually publishing our own indictment. But if we wish to retain the profession and hope of Christians, let us become Christians in deed and in truth, in temper and in practice—by renouncing war and violence, and by following the Prince of Peace. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.—If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."—"Then said Jesus to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and

follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." "And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell—yea, I say unto you, fear him."

May the reader, whose feelings revolt at taking the life of his fellow man and at the wickedness attendant on war, cherish those tender feelings: lest they become hardened, and the avenues to the heart become closed against the voice of conviction and calls of love, and he be left so to act as finally to have the sad reflection, that he has stained his hands with human blood.—Let him remember, that if war is an evil, every step towards it, is also an evil. Hence, the necessity of attending to the apostolic injunction, "Abstain from every appearance of evil."

And may he not be contented in barely abstaining from war himself; but use his exertions in favour of peace, in order to prevent his fellow men from giving countenance to this horrid custom; remembering that many bad customs, unjust laws, and inhuman practices, which were once popular have been gradually abolished. Of which, in latter times, that abominable commerce, the slave trade, is one. But their abolition has not been effected by a series of miracles. The great Controller of human concerns has done all these things; yet the events were produced by the instrumentality of enlightened and faithful men. And we have no right to expect that the abolition of war will be effected but by similar means.

And those who cordially engage in the cause of peace, and carefully cherish the spirit of the gospel, will become more and more assimilated to the temper of the Prince of Peace, and be the better prepared to enjoy the blessedness which he has promised to peace-makers.

THE END.

1

EXTRACT

FROM

THE ADVICE

OF

WILLIAM PENN,

TO HIS CHILDREN,

&c.

NO. 7.

SECOND EDITION.

NEW-YORK :

PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,

No. 372, PEARL-STREET.

1821.



EXTRACT, &c.



MY DEAR CHILDREN,

Not knowing how long it may please God continue me amongst you, I am willing to embrace this opportunity of leaving you my advice and counsel; and I both beseech you and charge you, by the relation you have to me, and the affection I have always shown to you and indeed received from you, that you lay up the same in our hearts, as well as in your heads, with a wise and religious care.

I will begin with that which is the beginning of all true wisdom and happiness—the holy fear of God.

Children, fear God:—that is to say, have a holy awe upon your minds to avoid that which is evil, and a strict care to embrace and to do that which is good. The measure and standard of all knowledge and duty, is the light of Christ

in your consciences, by which you* may clearly see if your deeds, and your words and thoughts too, are wrought in God or not ; for they are the deeds of the mind, and for which you must be judged : I say, with this divine light of Christ in your consciences, you may bring your thoughts, words, and works to judgment in yourselves, and have a right, true, sound, and unerring sense of your duty towards God and man. And as you come to obey this blessed light in its holy convictions, it will lead you out of the world's dark and degenerate ways and works, and bring you unto Christ's ways and life, and to be of the number of his true self-denying followers ; to take up your cross for his sake, who bore his for yours : and to become the children of the light, putting it on, as your holy armour ; by which you may see and resist the fiery darts of Satan's temptations, and overcome him in all his assaults.

I would a little explain this principle to you : It is called Light,† because it gives a man a sight of his sin. And it is also called the quickening Spirit ; for so he is called, and the Lord from heaven,‡ who is called, and calls himself, the Light of the world.§ And why is he called the

* John iii. 20, 21. † John i. 9. iii. 19, 20 21, and viii. 12.
 Eph. v. 8. 13, 14. 1 Thess. v. 5. 1 Epis. of John i. 5. 6. 7. Rev.
 xxi. 23. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45. 47. § John viii. 12.

Spirit? Because he gives man spiritual life.* Christ promised to send his Spirit to convince the world of their sins: wherefore, that which convinces you and all people of their sins, is the Spirit of Christ. This is highly prized, Rom. viii. (as you may read in that great and sweet chapter) for the children of God are led by it. This reveals the things of God that appertain to man's salvation and happiness,† it is the earnest God gives his people.‡ It is the great end and benefit and blessing of the coming of Christ, viz. the shining forth of this Light and pouring forth of this Spirit. Yea, Christ is not received by them that resist his light and Spirit in their hearts, nor can they have the benefit of his birth, life, death, resurrection, intercession, &c. who rebel against the Light. God sent his Son to bless us, in turning us from the evil of our ways; therefore have a care of evil, for that turns you away from God; and wherein you have done evil, do so no more. But be ye turned, my dear children, from that evil in thought, as well as in word or deed; or that will turn you from God your Creator, and from Christ, whom he has given you for your Redeemer: who redeems and saves his people *from* their sins,§ not *in* their sins; read

* John xvi. 8.

† 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 12.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 5.

§ Tit. ii. 14.

sin, and error, are the same ; so Light, Spirit, Grace, and Truth, are the same.

This is that which is come by Christ : and a measure of this Light, Spirit, Grace, and Truth, is given to every man and woman to see their way to go by, which leads out of the vain honours, compliments, lusts, and pleasures of the world.

O my dear children ! this is the pearl of price : part with all for it ; but never part with it for all this world. This is the Gospel leaven to leaven you ; that is, sanctify and season you in body, soul, and spirit, to God your heavenly Father's use and service, and your own lasting comfort. Yea, this is the divine and incorruptible seed of the kingdom, of which all truly regenerate men and women, Christians of Christ's making, are born. Receive it into your hearts, give it room there ; let it take deep root in you, and you will be fruitful unto God in every good word and work. As you take heed to it, and the holy enlightenings and motions of it, you will have a perfect discerning of the spirit of this world, in all its appearances, in yourselves and others ; the motions, temptations, and workings of it, as to pride, vanity, covetousness, revenge, uncleanness, hypocrisy, and every evil way ; you will see the world in all its shapes and features ; and you will be able to judge the world by it, and the spirit of the world in all its appearances ; you will see, as

re done, that there is much to deny, much to
 , and much to do ; and you will see, that
 is no power or virtue but in the Light, Spirit,
 e, and Truth of Christ, to carry you through
 world to God's glory, and your everlasting peace.
 a, you will see what religion is from above, and
 is from below ; what is of God's working, and
 of man's making and forcing ; also, what min-
 is of his Spirit and giving, and what of man's
 ing, framing, and imposing. You will, I say,
 rn the rise, nature, tokens, and fruits of the true
 the false ministry ; and what worship is spiritual,
 what carnal ; and what honour is of God, and what
 honour is, which is from below of men, yea,
 men, that the Jews and the world so generally
 and which is spoken against in John v. 44 ; you
 ee the vain and evil communication that cor-
 good manners ; the snares of much company
 business ; and especially the danger of the
 dship of this present evil world. * * * * *

aving thus expressed myself to you, my dear
 ren, as to the things of God, his truth and
 lom, I refer you to his Light, Grace, Spirit, and
 h within you, and to the Holy Scriptures of
 h without you, which from my youth I loved to
 , and were ever blessed to me, and which I
 ge you to read daily ; the Old Testament for
 ry chiefly, the Psalms for meditation and devo-

tion, the Prophets for comfort and hope, but especially the New Testament for doctrine, faith and worship ; for they were given forth by holy men of God in divers ages, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and are the declared and revealed mind and will of the Holy God to mankind under divers dispensations ; and they are certainly able to make the man of God perfect, through faith, unto salvation ; being a clear and true testimony to the salvation that is of God, through Christ, the second Adam, the Light of the world, the quickening Spirit, who is full of Grace and Truth ; whose Light, Grace, Spirit, and Truth, bear witness to them in every sensible soul, as they frequently, plainly, and solemnly bear testimony to the Light, Spirit, Grace, and Truth, both in himself, and in and to his people, to their sanctification, justification, redemption, and consolation, and in all men to their visitation, reproof, and conviction, in their evil ways ; I say, having thus expressed myself in general, I refer you, my dear children, to the Light and Spirit of Jesus that is within you, and to the Scriptures of truth without you.



O that children and people would be careful in their very early years, and as they grow up, and advance in life, to mind the reproofs of instruction

in their own breasts ! they are known to be the way of life, divine life to the soul.

This *something*, though they know not what it is, that checks them in secret for evil, both before and after they yield to temptation ; warning them beforehand not to touch or taste, and afterwards condemning them if they do so ; and inwardly inclining them to a life of religion and virtue ; this is the very thing, dear young people, whereby God worketh in you, to will and to do ; and by which he will, if you cleave to it, and work with it, enable you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him. **Despise it not, do no violence to its motions ; love it cherish it, reverence it, hearken to its pleadings with you ; give up without delay to its requirings, and obey its teachings. It is God's messenger for good to thy immortal soul : its voice in thy streets, is truly the voice of the living God :—Its call is a kind invitation to thee, from the throne of Grace.**

Hear it, and it will lead thee ; obey it, and it will save thee from the power of sin and Satan ; it will finally lead to an inheritance incorruptible in the mansions of rest, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.—J. SCOTT'S Journal, page 15.



AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES,
ON
THE SUBJECT
OF
ARDENT SPIRITS.

No. 8.

NEW-YORK :

TO BE HAD AT THE BOOKSTORE OF MAHLON DAY,
No. 372 Pearl-street.

1822.

ADDRESS.

FELLOW-CITIZENS.

Although some may think that nothing new or interesting can be said upon the subject to which your attention is here called, yet, considering it as one of the utmost importance, both to the happiness of individuals and to the prosperity of our country, the writer of these pages would solicit your candid perusal of the following facts and observations.

That ardent spirits are, in almost every case, unnecessary, if not injurious, to people in health, is a truth which a little observation must confirm. And that they are still more pernicious to morals, is every where too abundantly demonstrated.

It is a melancholy fact, that, in this country—favoured as we are with the Light of the Gospel, and the blessings of free institutions—even allowing for the increase of population, modern times have far surpassed all that went before them, in the strength and variety of drinks, and the extent and frequency of drinking. Some drink because their work is hard—others, because their employment is sedentary and dull. Is it warm?—men drink to be cool? Is it cool?—they drink to be warm. Every employment and every condition presents a plea for drinking. To supply these demands, importations, distilleries, and dram-shops, are multiplied to an alarming degree.

A common apology for the use of ardent spirits,

But, it should be observed, that when the excitement of liquor subsides, the capacity for exertion, whether mental or corporeal, sinks as much below its common level, as it was previously raised above it. Men who drink no spirits, are found to be more regularly competent to bodily exertions, than those who use them.

Again, it is said, they are necessary in cold weather, to prevent the effects of cold.

This is a mistaken idea. For the glow of warmth produced by strong drink, is not only soon over, but is followed by a weak and chilled state of the frame. Experience has taught many, that, when travelling, they are better able to bear the cold, by abstaining wholly from spirituous liquors; for the warmth occasioned by drinking at one stage, generally leaves them in this chilled state before they reach the ^{next} ~~apply~~.

Some assert, that it is excess that produces all the mischief; but that a little ardent spirits promotes health. Will experience confirm this assertion? Are people more healthy than they were when spirits were less used? Diseases of various kinds have increased with the increased use of ardent spirits. And how alarming is the fact, that it is this *little*, that, by degrees, makes the abstemious man a habitual drinker, the habitual drinker a drunkard!

The approach toward confirmed drunkenness, is gradual, unintentional, and almost imperceptible. It is always preceded by the *moderate use* of spirits.

Hence we have much to fear from the habitual, though moderate use of them. By the habit of drinking spirits in the morning, or at meals, many acquire a thirst for them, which they seem unable

to withstand. The custom lamentably prevalent amongst mechanics, and other labourers, of using them at stated times, has a direct tendency to introduce and establish the habit of excessive drinking. At places of public resort, or where people are drinking, how many, to avoid the reproach of singularity, stifle the warnings of conscience, and accept the offered glass! And how often are they thus led on, to the sacrifice of character and of every manly feeling! the idle seek company to pass away time; and too frequently meet with such as draw them into this vortex.

In many worthy and serious families it has been thought an essential part of politeness, to treat company with some kind of spirits. With the kindest intentions the decanter of brandy is brought out, or the cordial handed round. By this use of ardent spirits, in social circles, many have contracted ~~nece~~ a relish for them, as has ended in shameful intemperance. The poor, also, in this respect, must imitate the manners of the rich, even if it be at the expense of their more ordinary comforts. Thus, through the prevalence of custom, many men, in other respects thoughtful and considerate, slide into the practice of habitual drinking, without considering the danger to which they are exposed, the expense they incur, or the pernicious tendency of their example.

The customary use of spirits in the times of hay and harvest, has been a means of promoting intemperance among the labouring class of people. But can it be supposed, that ardent spirits, taken into the stomach in the hot sunshine of a harvest day, can be salutary? or tend to refresh the body already overheated by the weather? Dr. Rush, that searcher into the nature of these liquors, as well as into the constitution of the human body, says, "As well might we

throw oil into a house on fire, to prevent it from burning, as to pour ardent spirits into the stomach to prevent the effects of hot weather." Ardent spirits have no nourishment in them ; therefore how much more rational, that, on these occasions, the stomach should be supplied with something refreshing and nutritious.

Many, very many of the sad consequences of intemperance, may be attributed to the great and increased number of taverns and dram-shops. Not a few of these are mere places of resort for idlers and tipplers ; where vicious connexions are formed, and habits of indolence and drunkenness take root. In them our youth are often initiated into all the mysteries of iniquity, and imbibe the principles of the most ruinous licentiousness. It is at these places that the poor captives of strong drink find a ready supply. For it is seldom denied to any that can pay for it. Here many spend their hard-earned wages, while their families are suffering for want of the necessaries of life. Are not such taverns and dram-shops a public nuisance ? Ought they to be suffered to exist, in this day of light and knowledge ?

How do those who license such places, discharge their duty as guardians of the public interests ? Are they not answerable for much of the immense mischief, thus accruing to the community ? And those who are the immediate agents in dispensing the fatal dose, how do they perform the duties of citizens ? Is there no criminality in thus becoming accessory to their neighbour's ruin ? I would appeal immediately to the feelings of those of this class that can feel, if they do not, in their thoughtful moments, when reflecting upon the dismal condition of a drunkard, and the sufferings of his family, hear the whisperings of conscience, declaring them accomplices in this

evil ! How shall they stand acquitted before the Majesty of Heaven, of the awful denunciation, "Wo to him that giveth his neighbour drink—that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken !"

For selling liquors to the intemperate, there is one common excuse ; " If I do not, others will."—It is trifling with common sense, to suppose, that others' doing wrong will justify us for participating in it. And it is a melancholy reflection, that the love of gain should beguile any man of the sense of the accountability of his actions ! " For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul."

Now let us avail ourselves of the information we have to form some estimate of the extent of this evil. In 1801, the quantity of spirits distilled in the United States, from grain and fruit, was estimated at ten millions of gallons. In 1810, it appears by the returns of the marshals, giving an account of the manufactures of the several states, that the quantity distilled that year, from grain and fruit, exceeded twenty millions of gallons. Much the greatest part of this, probably more than three quarters, was from grain. It is calculated, that a bushel of rye or corn will produce from two and a half to three gallons of spirits. In 1810, therefore, between five and six millions of bushels of rye and corn, must have been made into spirits. If, in 1801, ten millions of gallons were distilled, and in 1810, twenty millions, by the same ratio, in the present year, near forty millions must have been made ; and, consequently, more than nine millions of bushels of rye and corn turned into this destructive article. The time employed in raising this grain, and in distilling it, how vast ! and how wastefully spent.

It further appears by the returns of the marshals, in 1810, that there were, in the whole, 25,499,382 gallons distilled that year. Upwards of five millions must therefore have been made from molasses. It is also stated, that about 8,000,000 of gallons of rum, and other distilled liquors, were imported into the United States the same year. The exports were 133,853—leaving the enormous quantity of 33,365,529 gallons for our home consumption.

Now, considering the high price of all imported liquors, and how much of our own manufacture is disguised and sold for foreign spirits, and the great advances made by tavern-keepers and retailers, the average expense to consumers, is not less than one dollar a gallon, or 33,365,529 dollars.

If the inhabitants of these states must pay annually thirty-three millions of dollars for ardent spirits, and, what is worse, drink them too, are not our prospects very alarming? Doubly so, when we consider, that far the greater part of this baneful liquor is distilled in the United States from the precious fruits of the earth, intended by our beneficent Creator for our sustenance!

Distillation is, no doubt, found to be profitable, or it would not be so extensively followed. The distiller's ordinary plea, as to the morality of his employment, is, "That spirits are good in themselves; that nobody is obliged to drink too much; and, therefore, stills are harmless things." But he must know, that not a thousandth part of what he makes, is needed for real usefulness. Of what avail then is this plea? Is he not to be accounted accessory to the ruin of the thousands who fall victims to these liquors? and to the great injury done to a vast number, who, though not drunkards, spend much of their

time at taverns in drinking, to the destruction of their morals, neglect of their business, waste of their property, and grief of their families? We would ask the conscientious distiller, how he reconciles it to his feelings, to contribute to this mass of evil and misery? It may be said, that, by his means, the bread of the needy is literally turned into poison. Can the blessing of Heaven rest upon property so acquired? To convert the principal staff of life, for the want of which many of the poor suffer, into this bane of health and morals, cannot but be offensive to Him whose providence is ever exerted for the supply of our wants. May all those who are acquiring wealth at the expense of suffering humanity, be made sensible, that, "He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase!" "Whoso stoppeth his ears to the cry of the poor, he shall also cry himself and shall not be heard."

Have we not cause to fear, that an Almighty, superintending Providence will withhold the increase of our fields, and visit us with famine, if we continue thus to abuse the blessings and bounty of his hand? Can the farmer ask, or expect a blessing on his labour, when the fruit of his field, intended for the support of life, is converted into an article of death? With what confidence can we look for a continuation of those blessings, which we are unthankfully appropriating to the gratification of a depraved appetite?

From the government of this country, laws may be expected to emanate, calculated to promote the happiness of every class of the people. In order to this, it is essentially necessary, that morality and virtue should be guarded: and that immorality and

and virtue, these sink, and vice rises into dominion. Such is the consequence with individuals, and with associated bodies. As surely as intemperance disturbs, and destroys the peace and happiness of a family, so surely does it plant the seeds of discord and sedition in a nation. That this vice is destructive of the best interests of society at large, is demonstrable; in that it inculcates habits of insubordination, instigates to crime, depraves morals, injures health, destroys the peace of the citizen, and reduces to want and misery. How often do our eyes behold the distressed widow, deprived of every thing comfortable? The miserable mother and her helpless children, pining in want, while the cruel father is indulging his insatiate appetite? Families, once in comfortable circumstances, reduced to suffering poverty? These, with other mischiefs, almost innumerable, are the sad consequences of the immoderate use of spirituous liquors. Is it not therefore the duty of a wise and humane government, to interpose, and "stand between the living and the dead, and stay the plague?"

Would it not be well if a duty were laid on imported and distilled spirits, which should amount almost to a prohibition? And does not sound policy dictate this to us, as it has done to other nations, who have wisely adopted such a measure? And now, cherishing the hope, that this will, ere long, be done, let every class of the people, in the mean time, put forth a helping hand, to check, as much as may be the growing evil.

Let those who are clear of using ardent spirits, keep so; and thereby show to others that health can be preserved, and necessary business accomplished without them. Let them admonish those who use them, of the danger to which they expose themselves, and of the pernicious tendency of their example.

That, for these reasons, they may be induced to abstain from them altogether. Let the vice of drunkenness be portrayed in its true colours, that the public mind may be awakened to a sense of the degradation to which it conducts its votaries. Let the paths that lead to it, be faithfully pointed out, that those who will hear and live, may turn away from them.

Much might be done by a voluntary agreement among neighbours and friends, not to make frequent use of these liquors in their families, or to furnish their labourers with them. in some parts of our country, a measure of this kind has very much lessened the use of them.

Agricultural societies are increasing in different parts of the Union, for the purpose of improvement in farming. If proper encouragement were held out by these, to farmers who got in their hay and harvest without ardent spirits, it would have a very salutary effect. Individuals who see the necessity of a reform in these respects, but find it not easy to deviate from common practice, would by having countenance from associated bodies, step forward boldly. A general disuse of intoxicating liquors on these occasions, would be an essential improvement in farming. For the supply of liquors, when several hands are employed, is attended with considerable expense. It may seem like a trifle for a man to spend six cents a day, but this sum, at simple interest, will, in 50 years, amount to \$2,650; and, at compound interest, to \$6,153—a handsome estate, thrown away by a practice which too many view with indifference. But the fear of encouraging a love of these liquors, ought to be the principal motive for withholding them.

Let agricultural and other societies, unite in petitions to government, to make laws that shall prevent

It would tend to check the unnecessary use of spirituous liquors, if the several religious societies were to make the sale and free use of them a subject of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. And are not the professors of Christianity called upon to bear a decided testimony against a practice, which every where so evidently presents us, not only with the appearance, but the sad reality of evil?

The influence which ministers of the gospel have, puts it in their power to effect much, by discouraging the use of it by example and precept. Their ministry is, "to seek and to save."

And although instances are rare, yet they are to be found, where men, habitually intemperate, have become reformed. This encourages us to endeavour to excite a greater interest on their behalf, that nothing may be wanting on the part of those who stand as watchmen and guardians of the public morals, to bring back the captives of strong drink, and restore them to society and themselves.

We would earnestly call the attention of the thinking and well-meaning part of the community to the importance of example. For vain are statutes, sermons, and precepts against tipling, while it receives countenance from the practice of sober and respectable men.

From the tenderest years of your children, O ye parents! impress on their minds an abhorrence of intemperance. Warn them of the danger of tampering with strong drink. Confirm your precepts by example. If you have been in the frequent use of spirits, let it be your first concern to reform yourselves. Refuse to place your children apprentices to men who are in the habit of drinking spirits; lest, before you are aware, they are overcome with the love of them.

To you, young men, the subject is very important. Your habits are forming; and on forming right ones your usefulness and respectability, your happiness in time and in eternity, greatly depend. The followers of strong drink will invite you; refuse to walk in the way with them. Beware of dram-drinking. Remember it is by tasting and tasting, that the habit gains strength. The oftener the appetite is indulged, the greater the thirst for it, till the lurking propensity becomes so strong as to captivate the judgment. As you value your comfort and best interest, shun the company, shun the places where temptations to drink await you. Bear in mind, that the drunkard rarely—very rarely, relinquishes the practice, till the grave consign his person and his name to oblivion. When the undeniable messenger is sent to such, how awful is the consideration of the scripture declaration,—“The drunkard cannot inherit the kingdom of God!”

We shall close these remarks with expressing our solicitude for those of the intemperate into whose hand they may fall. May you listen to the conviction of your own understandings, and endeavour to resume the energy, the resolution, and the native dignity of man. Resist the temptations held out to you. Let nothing induce you to tamper with this enemy of your happiness. Go not near it. Turn from it, as the image of death. The success of one day will give you assurance of that of another; one week, of another; one month, of another; and one year of another. Have you a sense of sinfulness? Look to the pardoning mercy of God. Have you a sense of weakness? Rely on the power of omnipotence. To have gained a victory, will indeed be at the expense of self-gratification. But a conquest of self may be the harbinger of a happy immortality. “To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

ON

SELF-EXAMINATION.

No. 9.

NEW YORK :

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1822.

SELF-EXAMINATION.



IN this age of general inquiry, ignorance is esteemed dishonourable. In almost every sort of knowledge, there is a contest for superiority. Learning and intellectual attainments are never to be undervalued. Knowledge is excellent. But, how short is the period before "tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away!"

Shall we then esteem it dishonourable to be ignorant in any thing which relates to life and literature, to taste and science, and not feel ashamed to live in ignorance of our own hearts?

To have a flourishing estate, and a mind in disorder; to keep exact accounts with a steward, and no reckoning with our Maker; to have an accurate knowledge of loss or gain in our business, and to remain utterly ignorant whether our spiritual concerns are improving or declining, is a wretched miscalculation of the comparative value of things. To bestow our attention on objects in an opposite proportion to their importance, is surely no proof that our learning has improved our judgment.

Man is favoured with a capacity to reflect upon all that is done within him; can discern the tendencies of his soul, and is acquainted with his own purposes. This faculty of self-inspection, this inward eye, is given to us to be kept in habitual operation. We have appetites to control, imaginations to restrain, tempers to regulate, passions to subdue; and how

can this internal work be effected, how can our thoughts be kept within due bounds, how can a proper bias be given to the affections, if this capacity of discerning, if this faculty of inspection, be not kept in regular exercise? A superficial glance, a casual look, is not enough for a thing so deceitful as the human heart.

We should examine not only our conduct, but our opinions; not only our faults, but our prejudices; not only our propensities, but our judgments. Our actions themselves will be obvious enough; it is our intentions that require the scrutiny. These we should follow up to their remotest springs, scrutinize to their deepest recesses. "What I know not, teach thou me," should be our constant petition in all our researches.

Did we turn our thoughts inward, it would abate much of that self-satisfaction, with which we swallow the flattery of others. Flattery hurts not him who flatters not himself. If we strictly examined our motives, we should frequently blush at the praises our actions receive. Let us then conscientiously inquire, not only what we do, but whence and why we do it, from what motive and for what end.

Self-inspection, by showing us our faults, preserves us from self-conceit. Self-acquaintance will give us a far more deep and intimate knowledge of our own errors, than we can possibly have, with all the inquisitiveness of an idle curiosity, of the errors of others. We are eager enough to blame them without knowing their motives. We are no less eager to vindicate ourselves, though we cannot be entirely ignorant of our own. An impartial review of our own infirmities, is the likeliest way to make us tender and compassionate to those of others.

To be delighted at finding that people think better

of us than we are conscious of deserving, is in effect to rejoice in the success of our own self-deception.

To live at random, is not the life of a rational, much less of an immortal, least of all of an accountable being. To be every hour liable to death without any habitual preparation for it ; to believe that we shall exist through all the countless ages of eternity, and yet to make little inquiry whether that eternity is likely to be happy or miserable, is an inconsiderateness of which he who lives without self-examination is always guilty.

For want of a strict acquaintance with ourselves, we remain in much ignorance of our inability to meet with cheerfulness even the ordinary trials of life. Nursed in the lap of luxury, we entertain an indefinite notion that we have but a loose hold on the world, and on the things that belong to it. But let some accident take away not the world, but some trifle on which we thought we set but little value while we possessed it, and we find to our astonishment, that we hold not the world only, but even this trivial possession, with a pretty tight grasp. Such detections of our self-ignorance, if they do not serve to wean, ought at least to humble us.

There is a spurious sort of self-examination which does not serve to enlighten, but to blind. A person who has left off some notorious vice, who has softened some shades of a glaring sin, or substituted some outward forms in the place of real religion, looks with pleasure on his change of character. He deceives himself by taking his standard from his former conduct, or from the character of men still worse than himself. He looks rather at the discredit than the sinfulness of his former life, and being more ashamed of what is disreputable, than grieved at what is vicious, he is, in this state of shallow reformation, more in danger, in proportion as he is more

redit. He is not aware that it is not having a
 or two less that will carry him to Heaven, while
 heart is still attached to the world, and estranged
 God.

we are most disposed to look at those parts of our
 character which will best bear examination, and
 which consequently least need it. If a covetous man,
 for instance, examines himself, instead of turning his
 attention to the guilty part, he turns from his avarice
 to sobriety, of which his very avarice is perhaps
 the source. Another, who is the slave of passion,
 lightly rests upon some act of generosity, which he
 considers as a fair commutation for a favourite vice,
 would cost him more to renounce than he is will-
 ing to part with. We are too much disposed to
 look on that smiling side of the prospect which
 seduces and deceives us, and to shut our eyes upon
 the part which we do not choose to see, because we
 are resolved not to quit. Self-love always holds a
 balance between the superficial self-examiner and his
 sins. The nominal christian wraps himself in
 sins which he makes himself believe are religion.
 He exults in what he does, and overlooks what he
 ought to do.

It is only by scrutinizing, that we can know the
 truth. It is only by knowing the heart, that we can
 reform the life. Nor must the scrutiny be occasional,
 but regular. Let us not run into long arrears, but
 settle our accounts frequently. And let it be one
 object of our frequent inquiry, whether, since we
 have scrutinized our hearts, our worldly affairs, or our
 moral concerns, have had the predominance there.
 Which our affections have been most bent; and
 especially, how we have conducted ourselves when
 there has arisen a competition between the interests
 of both. And it is one grand use of self-inquiry, to
 remind us that all *unforsaken sins are unrepented*

To a christian, there is this substantial comfort attending a minute self-inspection, that when he fewer sins to be noted, and more victories over temptation obtained, he has a solid evidence of advancement, which amply repays his trouble.

Self-examination, by detecting self-love ; self-al by weakening its power ; self-government by reducing its despotism, turns the temper of the from its wrong bias, controls the disorderly appetites, and, under the influence of divine grace, in a measure restores to man that dominion over his Desires, passions, and appetites, are brought to more in their appointed order ; subjects, not tyrants. What the Stoics vainly attempted, christianity effects. It restores man to a dominion over his own will, and, in a good measure, enthrones him that empire, which he had forfeited by sin. Self finds it unsafe to indulge security ; he therefore vigilance continues his inspection.

Is it not astonishing that we should go on re-ling periodically, "Try me O God," while we yet neglecting to try ourselves ? Is it not some more like defiance than devotion, to invite the inspection of Omniscience to that heart which we ourselves neglect to inspect ? How can a Christian boldly cry out to the Almighty, "Search me, O and know my heart ; try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me," when himself neglects to "examine his heart," is afraid "proving his thoughts," and dreads to inquire there "be any wicked way" in himself, knowing the inquiry ought to lead to the expulsion.

In order to unmask our hearts, let us not be contented to examine our flagrant vices, but our secret

which have obtained for us the public estimation. Let us examine if they were genuine in the principle, simple in the intention, honest in the prosecution. Let us ask ourselves, if, in some admired instances, our generosity had no tincture of vanity, our charity no taint of ostentation? Do we never deceive ourselves by mistaking a constitutional indifference of temper for christian moderation? Do we never construe our animal activity into christian zeal? Do we never mistake our obstinacy for firmness, our pride for fortitude, our love of controversy for the love of God?

Pride will of itself stimulate to the performance of many things that are laudable. These performances will produce pride, as they were produced by it; whereas humility has no outward stimulus. Divine grace alone produces it. It is so far from being actuated by the love of fame, that it is not humility, till it has laid the desire of fame in the dust.

If an actual virtue consists in the dominion over a contrary vice, humility is the conquest over pride, charity over selfishness. This proves that all virtue is founded in self-denial, self-denial in self-knowledge, and self-knowledge in self-examination. Pride so insinuates itself into much of what we do, and say, and think, that our apparent humility has not seldom its origin in pride. The more we lay open the wounds which sin has made, the more earnestly shall we seek the remedy which christianity has provided.

But instead of seeking for self-knowledge, we are glancing about us for grounds of self-exaltation. Instead of pulling down the edifice which pride has raised, we are looking round on our good works for props to support it. We excuse ourselves for the commission of many faults, by alleging that they are common, and by no means peculiar to ourselves. This is one of the weakest of our deceits. Faults are not less personally ours, because others commit simi-

lar ones. Is it any diminution of our error that others are guilty of the same?

Self-love is as busy in concealing our own defects, as in detecting those of others, especially those of the wise and good. If the faults of good men are injurious to themselves, they might be rendered profitable to us, if we were careful to convert them to their true use. But instead of turning them into a means of promoting our own watchfulness, we employ them mischievously in two ways. We lessen our respect for pious characters, when we see the infirmities which are blended with their good qualities, and we turn their failings into a justification of our own, which are not, like theirs, overshadowed with virtues. To admire the excellencies of others without imitating them, is fruitless admiration; to condemn their errors without avoiding them, is unprofitable censoriousness.

In order to profit by the defects of others, let us, instead of remarking on them, endeavour to root out the same, or similar defects in our own heart. The faults of others we censure, the death of others we lament, but how seldom do we make use of the one for our amendment, or of the other for our preparation.

It is the fashion of the times to try experiments in the arts, in agriculture, in philosophy. And shall the Christian stop short in his scrutiny; shall he not examine and inquire till he lays hold on the very heart of religion? till he establishes the distinction between appearance and reality, between studying religion critically, and embracing it practically? between having our conduct creditable, and our hearts sanctified?

Of Christianity, humility is the prime grace; and this grace can never take root and flourish in a heart that lives in ignorance of itself. And if we are not humble, we cannot be Christians.

But it may be asked, is there to be no end to this vigilance? Is there no assigned period when this self-denial may become unnecessary? The true answer is,—We may cease to watch, when there is no longer any temptation to assail us. We may omit our self-denial, when there is no selfish disposition in us. We may dismiss repentance, when sin is abolished. We may neglect prayer, when we no longer need the favour of God. To discontinue our vigilance at any period short of this, will be to defeat all the virtues we have practised on earth; and to put to hazard all our hopes of happiness in Heaven.

In our self-examination, let us not suffer our self-love to escape detection.

“The idol self,” says a pious writer, “has made more desolation among men, than ever was made in those places where idols were served by human sacrifices. To worship images is a more obvious, but it is scarcely a more degrading idolatry, than to set up self in opposition to God. To devote ourselves to this service is as perfect slavery, as the service of God is perfect freedom. The Son of God declared, ‘I came not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.’ This was his grand lesson, this was his distinguishing character. And we are called upon to imitate his example.”

Self-will is the overflowing fountain of the evil tempers which deform our hearts; of the boiling passions which inflame and disorder society; the root of bitterness on which its corrupt fruits grow. We set up our own understanding against the wisdom of God, and our own passions against the will of God.

We are apt to speak of self-love as if it were only a symptom, whereas it is the distemper itself; a malignant distemper which has possession of the moral constitution, and of which every part of the system

participates. This corrupting principle polluting coming in contact with it, whatever in itself is pure and noble.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" This position and interrogation we read with complacency and being a portion of scripture, we think it not be decent to controvert it. We read it however with a secret reservation, that it is only the heart of all the rest of the world that is meant, and we make the application which the Scriptures intend. Each individual hopes that there is *one* heart which may escape the charge, and he makes the single exception in favour of his own.

As a theory, we are ready enough to admit the truth of knowledge; yet when the practice comes in question we are as blindfold as if our happiness depended on our ignorance. One of the first duties of a professed Christian, is to endeavour to conquer this antipathy to the self-denying doctrines against which the human heart so sturdily stands out. The learner endures incredible pains for the acquisition of knowledge. The philosopher cheerfully consumes the midnight oil in his laborious pursuits; he willingly sacrifices food and rest to conquer a difficulty in science. In the labour is pleasant, the fatigue is grateful, the difficulty is not without its charms. Why do we not so differently in our religious pursuits? Because in the most arduous human studies, there is no contradiction of self, there is no opposition to the will, there is no combat of the affections.

Self-love has the talent of imitating whatever the world admires, even though it should happen to be the christian virtues. It leads us, from our desire of reputation, to avoid all vices which would not bring punishment, but discredit by the common

SHRINE & VOTIVE TABLES OF OTHER DEITIES, FROM THE TEMPLES. He is made only one thing perfect, the only one having powers of both mind and body. He is made to operate and make his will in the sacrifices which each requires. Thus satisfied, he compares himself with those who have sunk into coarser material, and triumphs in the dignity of his own character.

here is, if the expression may be allowed, a sort of religious self-decent, and affectation of humility, but is in reality full of self, which is entirely occupied with self, which resolves all importance into what concerns self, which only looks at things as they relate to self. This religious vanity operates in two ways. While we affect to charge ourselves with more importance than is attributed to us, we are offended at the imputation of the smallest individual fault. While, on the other hand, we lament our general want of all goodness, we contend for every particle that is disputed.

of which we are really guilty. We do it in the hope of being contradicted, and thus of being confirmed in the secret good opinion we entertain of ourselves.

The great, the only effectual antidote to self-love, is to get the love of God and of our neighbour firmly rooted in the heart. Yet let us ever bear in mind, that dependance on our fellow-creatures is as carefully to be avoided, as love of them is to be cultivated. There is none but God, on whom the principles of love and dependance form but one duty.

REMARKS

ON

The Doctrine

OF THE

INFLUENCE

OF

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

NO. 10.

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The importance of the subject which the following remarks are designed to illustrate, will, it is presumed, ensure them an attentive perusal.

The doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit on the mind, being of general application, resting on a basis no less than Christianity itself, it will readily be seen, that a knowledge of it is inseparable from Christian practice, and the enjoyment of true happiness.

It was desirable that the proofs upon which the arguments were founded, should be incorporated in the work: this, however, could not be done, without swelling the tract to too great a size.

These proofs being drawn from the Bible, a treasure which, it is to be hoped, most have in possession, it is earnestly recommended to the reader, to follow the references to the several texts to which they point.

REMARKS, &c.

THE influence of the Spirit of Truth on the mind, has been maintained by the most eminent and pious persons in all ages; and to it they have attributed their stability and advancement in true religion. This is strong presumptive evidence that it is consistent with the doctrine contained in the Scriptures, but more especially in the New Testament; and ought to render us doubly careful, that we do not reject it without due examination. Notwithstanding, there is a class of persons professing christianity, who consider this gift to have been shed only on the primitive believers, and that any belief in its existence in the present day, is irrational and enthusiastic.

On viewing the objections of those who profess to deny the influence of the Spirit, the following considerations present themselves:—That the effusion of the Holy Spirit was announced by the Prophets who foretold the coming of our Lord, and was promulgated by his precursor, John, (Matt. iii. 1, 12. Mark 1. 1-8. John, i. 29-33) as a distinguishing circumstance attending the introduction of the gospel; which shews it to have been an *integral* part of that dispensation, and that it must therefore continue till the dispensation is abrogated; which cannot in common reason be denied.

That we are supported in this opinion, by a reference

to the intension for which this gift was dispensed to man
kind; which, it appears by scripture testimony, was for
the purpose of assisting man in the work of regeneration;
(John, iii. 1-8) and which assistance must be
equally necessary now, as his weakness and liability to
sin and transgression remain unchanged.

That, though the effusion of the Spirit upon many of
the primitive believers, was attended with extraordinary
gifts, to forward the purposes of the Divine will, in the es-
tablishment of the Gospel, yet it was not universally so;
but appeared in the great mass of the early believers, in
the same way as it is believed to appear in the present day:
not being attended with extraordinary gifts, but producing
the effects of righteousness.

That the fruits of the Spirit cannot be different from or
contradictory to what is asserted in the Scriptures; and
therefore a belief in its influence on the mind, cannot be
enthusiastic or irrational, though it may be misunderstood
and abused.

A few brief observations on these points may be useful
to such readers, as have not been accustomed to consider
this subject with reference to the objections stated.

It is undoubtedly the object of true religion to purify
the heart and conduct, so as to render us worthy of the
divine acceptance, and the enjoyment of a state of bliss
hereafter; or in other words, of an admission into the
kingdom of heaven; but in order to this, we must in this
life have undergone that change of our nature, which will
in some degree assimilate us to the divine purity; the ne-
cessity of which is fully stated in the Scriptures. In the

emphatic language of our Saviour, it is called being born again; and the same purpose is variously named in different parts of the New Testament. (Ephes. iv. 15-30. v. 8-21.) This change, conscious as we must be of sin and imperfection, must be allowed to be fully consistent with our ideas of what is reasonable and correct; but when it assumes the shape of a divine revelation, we are not permitted to doubt of its *necessity*. The sayings of our Lord, as well as the writings of his apostles, fully confirm it. In that conversation which he had with Nicodemus, memorable for its deep instruction in religious truth, this change is ascribed to the operation of the Spirit; and it must be affected by the same means to the end of time; our natural state being the same it has always been.

His discourse with the woman of Samaria, (John iv. 5-26) points out a living principle to be given by him, which was to produce eternal life to its possessor: and with this there is a remarkable coincidence, in his declaration on the last great day of the feast, which the Evangelist expressly declares to allude to the gift of the Spirit, which was to be shed after he was glorified. (John vii. 37-39.) The parable of the Man and his Friend, (Luke xi. 5-13.) is equally clear as to the Divine intention in this respect; and that we ought, moreover, earnestly to desire it. And it may be here asked, as we are by nature so prone to sin, how are we to root out our evil propensities, but by some assistance *different* in its nature and purpose? What but this must enable us to take up the daily cross to our natural inclinations? to deny ourselves the pleasures of sense, or the allurements of interest, when they are

inconsistent with purity ? The deficient practice of all mankind, while they have not their dependence on Divine aid, is a clear answer to these questions : for however fair the outward conduct may appear, if the source of action—the heart, be not purified, which it can only be through the operation of Divine power, it only wants the storms of temptation to overthrow the fabric ; and as the nature of sin is the same in all, though its modifications may be various, so we are all equally in need of this assistance—the learned with the ignorant—the philosopher with the peasant.

Persons possessed of good natural dispositions, and placed in situations favourable to regular conduct, may have a sort of habitual morality, which leaves us nothing to accuse them of ; but let them not suppose themselves secure on that account. That virtue which is not the effect of principle, is of very uncertain duration, and we are *all* required to *improve* our talents and advantages. We ought also to remember, that Christianity goes upon the necessity of a *change* of our nature and affections, as the only sure means of producing conduct consistent with the purity of its precepts, under all circumstances ; even where our private interests and inclinations may be opposed to it. The work of religion, if properly undertaken, is sure in its end, but it is of gradual, and sometimes, from the prevalence of our lusts, of painful operation ; and if our minds are sufficiently awakened to the subject, none will find time for idleness or self-security.

In those sublime and instructive conversations which our Saviour had with his disciples, a short time previous

o his suffering, (John, xiv. 15-27. xv. xvi. 1-14.) as well as in that ever-memorable prayer he offered up for them, (John xvii.) he has shown that the great purpose of his mission was, to reveal the way of Truth, and to establish a spiritual communion and communication with himself and the Father, through the Holy Spirit, for our help and direction in the way of righteousness. The necessity of *keeping* up this communication, in order to the production of fruit, is beautifully and incontrovertibly set forth in the parable of the Vine and the Branches. This Spirit he also declared, was to lead into all truth, and to reprove *the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; thus comprehending every thing that can relate to salvation, or the knowledge of God. These declarations are in themselves decisive; and as they are elucidated by the Apostles, they become further confirmed. The manner in which they have reasoned on the operations of the Spirit, and declared its effects, clearly shows, that to it was attributed their progress in the Christian life. For though some had extraordinary gifts for the service of the Church, as appears by 1. Cor. chap. xii. yet these being for specific purposes, could not be expected to be possessed by all.—But the Apostle says, “*a manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*” This shows its *general* intention with respect to mankind at large. And the extraordinary gifts he enumerates, had ultimately the same tendency, by an unusual display of Divine power, to strike conviction on the mind of the most unenlightened as well as to remove the opposition and prejudices of the Jews, who had become so much attached to the ritual of the law,

that it was with difficulty they would admit the evidences of a religion, so pure and spiritual as Christianity.

It is remarkable, in the chapter just named, as well as in that which immediately follows, how earnestly the Apostle recommends them to covet the *best* gifts, in contradistinction to those which were extraordinary; and concludes by showing what he calls "a more excellent way," pointing out the possession of Charity, as comprehending the substance of Christianity, to be a transcendent object of attainment; without which all other qualifications, how extraordinary soever, are of no value: and in continuation, in the next chapter, the xivth, he shows by a course of strong and clear reasoning, the superiority of the gift of prophecy, or speaking to edification, exhortation and comfort, over that of speaking with tongues; which further confirms the opinion, that the direct and permanent object of spiritual gifts, was the establishment of righteousness. It is therefore quite consistent with sound reason to conclude, that after Christianity was firmly established, the miraculous gifts would be withdrawn; an opinion, which is without detriment to the continuation of those gifts, which remain to be necessary in the constitution of a Christian church. Hence gospel ministry, as well as other qualifications for the spiritual service of the church, must continue to be derived from the same source; and is therefore not dependent on human learning or attainments, though our usefulness may be increased by the possession of them. Nor let any one suppose, that this opinion leads to enthusiasm or self-exaltation. Spiritual gifts are not at our command, and no man receives them,

who is not promoting the work of redemption in his own mind ; and as every step he takes in advance, must be preceded and followed by a perception of his own imperfection and unworthiness, it must have a constant tendency to produce *humility*, meekness and gentleness : and if these effects are not produced, such a person is deceiving himself. A due degree of earnestness and fervency in our religious duties, is however very proper ; and must necessarily follow an advancement in the knowledge and love of God.

It appears, therefore, that those who ascribe pride or enthusiasm to a belief in this doctrine, have a mistaken view of it. Perhaps they have never examined the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles with sufficient attention ; or have been misled by a strong attachment to preconceived opinions, which may have been inculcated in early youth.

It is not unusual for such persons to ask for definitions and explanations on this subject, which from its nature cannot be given. We may be very sure of a thing which we feel, though we may fail in defining that feeling to the satisfaction of another, who is not inclined to admit it. Our own experience teaches us, how slowly we admit an outward fact, when the mind is foreclosed against it ; much more, things of a less tangible nature. To such persons it may be observed, that those impressions which are not received into the mind, *through the medium of the outward senses*, are not in their nature capable of explanation, except by their effects ; in the same way, as many of our common feelings can only be explained, by a reference to similar feelings in others.

We feel the Spirit of truth, ~~reproving~~ ^{reproving} us for the evil of our thoughts and conduct, and ~~constraining~~ ^{constraining} us to aspire after greater purity of life and manners; and humbling us under a sense of our weakness and imperfections and having this feeling we know that it exists, although the exact way of its operation it may be difficult to define, to those who are indisposed to acknowledge the same influence. We also find it conformable to those descriptions of its nature and effects, which we meet with in the New Testament. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every man that is born of the Spirit." Those therefore who would deprive Christianity of its spiritual character, would deprive it of what is its distinguishing and superior recommendation. For from this cause alone can arise that uniform and exemplary morality, which is the possession only of inward worth, and of a mind purified on Christian principles. (Romans, viii. 1-17. 1. Cor. ii. 9-16. Galat. v. 16-26.) Any person who will attentively read the New Testament, must be convinced, if plain evidence can convince him, that the religion taught by Christ is spiritual in its nature, and must therefore have a spiritual *ministration*. (Colos. i. 21-29.) It cannot be supposed, when we consider those pathetic illustrations of the paternal regard of our Creator, which have been given by Christ in his discourses, that our Almighty parent would require from us, a degree of purity which he would not enable us to attain. Indeed there is no adequate reason, unless the fault be on our part, why the effusion of the Holy

Spirit should be attended with less power now, miraculous gifts apart, than it was in the days of the primitive Christians. Though all men have sufficient illumination to guide their steps in the pursuit of truth, yet if they are not sincerely* disposed to follow it, they must be deficient in that degree of faith which is necessary to the full influence of the Spirit. It is easy for a man to say he is a Christian, being so by profession; but amongst the primitive believers, no man would assume the name, who was not so in heart; since he had a test of his sincerity always ready, in the scorn of unconverted friends, and the abuse of a prejudice and hard hearted people. Nothing therefore but a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and the consequent obligation to obey its precepts, could induce him to embrace a profession, which carried with it so many circumstances mortifying to human nature. The same sincerity of conversation would in the present day produce the same effects, in the assistance and communion of the Holy Spirit, in that degree which our particular situation might require, in the sight of divine wisdom. I would ask any person of sound understanding, if it would seem consistent with the divine intention, to introduce a gift attended with so many extraordinary circumstances, and sanctioned by the descent of the Son of God, if it were intended to be withdrawn with the first believers, who form so small a part of his rational creation? Such an opinion seems irreconcilable with the *undiminished* power, the wisdom, the justice, and the beneficence of God. But on this, as well as every other question connected with our

*The evidence of sincerity is obedience to the divine law, so far as we know it. See James, ii, 14 to 17.

well-being, the sacred volume is sufficiently clear to common understandings, and a disbelief in any of the fundamental principles of Christianity, if examined into, will be found frequently to arise from a disinclination to submit to those salutary privations which it requires; but we are at the same time the only certain evidence of our faith and love to God. Let us not therefore deceive ourselves if our salvation be wrought out, it can only be by the means which he has appointed. And if it should appear by the scriptures, that it must be effected through the influence and assistance of the Spirit, it is in vain for us to seek out another way. Sincerity and true devotedness are only wanting on our part to be effectual through the promises, for the production of all the beneficial consequences so strikingly expressed in various parts of the scriptures. This divine instructor would wound us only to heal us as we yielded to its reproofs, would often draw our souls into retirement and prayer for the pardon of our transgressions, and for assistance more fully to obey the divine will; and finally establish that communion between the soul of man and his God, which our Saviour largely testified (John, xiv. xv. xvi. Ephes. ii. 16-22) and which, whether in public assemblies, or in private retirement, must be the medium of divine communication and worship; and continued in, we should in our spiritual progress undoubtedly experience the truth of the prophetic declaration "I will make darkness light before them, and ere long things straight: these things will I do unto them that they shall not forsake them." (Isa. xlii. 16.)

FINIS.

AN

ADDRESS,

In Gospel Love.

'All things work together for good to them who love God.'
Rom. viii. 28.

NO. 11.

New-York:

PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,

No. 372, Pearl-street.

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1823.

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AN ADDRESS, &c.

My Dear Brethren and Sisters,

WHOM I salute in that love which ought to unite the families of the whole earth, since we are all the children of one common parent ; all subject to the same feelings ; all partakers of the mercies of God, and invited by our heavenly Father to become inhabitants of his kingdom of glory, when we have done with the things of time, and death has closed our mortal eyes upon all that now surrounds us ; I have often thought of you with desires that you may now where to seek support and comfort, in those difficulties and trials you sometimes meet with. I have desired you may believe that the goodness of God, the gracious Lord of the universe, is not confined to any rank of men. Do not think he loves you less than others, because you often feel the want of the conveniences, and sometimes can scarcely procure the necessaries of life. Every station has trials belonging to it, and they who bound in riches, and appear to be the happiest, are often feeling, in secret griefs and anxieties to which you are strangers.—They do not always enjoy their possessions. Riches and power bring cares along with them, and expose to temptations which do not attack the poor. Such as are in high stations, and feel they are not happy, would be willing to exchange places with the poor if they could know real peace ; while the poor are thinking how truly they should enjoy life, could they procure the possessions of their wealthy neighbours. But the truth is, happiness is equally offered to every body by that Almighty Being, who is called the Father of the Universe. The advice which is given us in the Bible is this, “ Acquaint thyself with God and be at peace.” This is the one sure means of comfort, whether for rich or poor. It is only for want of knowing God, that so many in the

world are unhappy ; for if they were willing to follow this counsel, they would know that he is graciously disposed to bless every one whom he hath created.

Perhaps some of you may be ready to say, " If God loves me, why do I feel so many pains, so much distress and anxiety ? But, dear people, it is not by the design of a gracious God that we are miserable : on the contrary, he designed us for happiness ; and though none of us can pass through life without pain and sorrow, these pains and sorrows frequently are the effects of sin, and spring originally from our own errors, and the disorders of human nature in its fallen state. Our heavenly Father like a good physician, intends that all the troubles of this life shall prove as good and wholesome medicines, to cure us of our faults, which are like a sickness of the soul ; and if we were but willing to learn the lessons he would teach, we should know that help is laid upon one who is mighty to save, and able to deliver to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him. (*Heb. vii. 25.*)

O ! you who have many difficulties to encounter ; you who sometimes think there is nobody so unhappy as yourselves ! consider, I entreat you, have you not always been more ready to think of your troubles than to remember the blessings and mercies of God ? Try to find out what is the cause of your greatest affliction. I think I may safely say, there are no people so unhappy as those who are most forgetful of God. How frequently do poor families suffer through the bad conduct of a man, who spends in intemperate drinking the price of his labour, which should provide for his helpless little ones. How many young people are not able to get forward in life, because they are known to have been bred up under parents who have set them an ill example, and too frequently encouraged them to tell lies, steal and keep idle company. Now if the hearts of people were more generally inclined to do what they know to be right, they would avoid the greatest miseries of life ; for religion would teach them to do justly, love mercy, and walk

ably with their God. (*Micah* vi. 8.) It would make them industrious and sober, desirous to bring up their families in the love and fear of Almighty God, and thus remove the greatest of their real troubles. They would learn to ask for the blessing of God upon their honest labours, and surely he would give them every thing he saw needful for their souls and bodies. Religion would teach them to bless him if they were favoured with health and strength; and if they were visited by sickness, enable them to bear it with patience, and then they would learn many useful lessons from such afflictions, and know what solid peace is given to them who patiently submit to their heavenly Father's will; for the Apostle Paul says, All things work together for good, to them who love God. (*Romans* viii. 28.) I know that they who have large families to provide for have often many cares, but I know also that our heavenly Father encourages them to cast our cares upon him for he careth for us. (*1 Peter*, v. 7.)

I hope there is not one amongst those I now address, who is so ignorant as not to know "that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (*John* iii. 16.) Know ye not the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that you, through his poverty, might be made rich? (*2 Cor.* viii. 9.) rich in those treasures which are laid up for all his obedient followers, here neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. The history of this gracious Saviour of the world, and the accounts of his wondrous acts of love towards poor perishing souls, with the doctrines he and his apostles taught, expressive of the nature of the Christian religion, are contained in that part of the Scripture called the New Testament; which, my dear friends, if you have any love for your dearest and best interests, I do most earnestly recommend to your perusal. But if you would read it to profit, do so with your

hearts raised to God, beseeching him to enable you so to read that you may understand the sacred truths which it contains.

In one of the sermons our Lord Jesus Christ preached to the people, he told them to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, assuring them that all things needful should be added, (*Matt.* 6th chap.) He directed them to consider the fowls of the air, and the lilies of the field, adding, "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, &c. shall he not much more clothe you?" This then ought to convince us, that the want of true religion, is the cause of the miseries of which we complain. Religion will indeed prove as a sovereign balsam to sweeten every bitter cup, and strengthen us to pass with patience the days of our mortal course. It will discover to us many comforts in every situation, and we shall know that it is the true pearl of great price, more precious than silver or gold.

Perhaps some of you may be ready to say, "What have I to do with religion, I who am so much taken up with my family. I have scarcely time to take a little rest. They who have nothing to do, may indeed think of religion, but as for me I am obliged to work like a slave to earn a little bread." Should any of you think something of this kind, let me answer, you have a very wrong notion of religion, if you suppose none can attend to its dictates, but they who have much leisure. Neither the wisdom of this world, nor much leisure, are absolutely necessary for the exercise of true religion. The more time we have, the more indeed we ought singly to devote to the worship and service of our greatest and best friend, for such the Almighty is to us:—but religion consists in a state of heart which loves God above all things, and looks up to him as our Father, our Friend, the Teacher of man, who waits to be gracious, who invites us to learn of himself. Let us consider this, and we shall know, that in the midst of unavoidable business, we can lift up our thoughts to him, and he will accept the prayers of the heart: these

will rise before him when our lips are silent and our eyes are shut. But, alas ! it is for want of desire to know God, that so many are strangers unto him, and in the state of their own hearts : and O ! what a pity it is that any should miss of the happiness of knowing this great and good, this holy and glorious Being ! for this, saith the Saviour of mankind, is life eternal, to *know* that the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (*John* 17th chapter.)

What a comfort, what a consolation it is to know him as the God of love, and such the Scriptures declare him to be. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (*1 John* iv. 16.) This is the reason why he requires us to seek and serve, to honour and obey him. And O ! there is every reason to love him above all. He crowns our days with tender mercies, with abundant loving kindness : he is a kind and compassionate Father, the fountain of Light, of Life and Love. You, who are Mothers, hear the words of tender mercy, with which he condescends to speak to all who have put their trust in him. "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (*Isaiah* xlix. 15th.) Such is the love and watchful care of God our heavenly Father, of whom it is declared, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." (*Isa.* xl. 11.) "Behold he that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep." (*Psalms* cxxi. 4.)

From the very *beginning* of time to the present day, he has made himself known to the world by unbounded, unmerited mercy, goodness, and love, declaring that he afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the children of men : for like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them who fear him. And will you then live in forgetfulness of Him who never forgets you ? Will you remain in bondage to sin and satan, when you are called by the gospel of Jesus into the glorious liberty of the sons and daughters of God ? Will you obey satan, the enemy of your souls, rather than serve that gracious

God, in whom you live, and move, and have your being? O! think how great and holy He is, who is Lord of heaven and earth; before whom bright and glorious angels fall prostrate in adoration. Think how he created all things by the word of his power, and upholds them continually.

If he were to command the sun to depart from the heavens, it would vanish away; if he were to forbid the earth to bring forth fruit, we must perish from off it. And will you who breathe his air, and partake of the benefits of his creation, will you complain you who have had no proof of his love? Will you to whom he has given life for such glorious purposes, be so ungrateful as to forget him, your kind Benefactor? Well might king David the psalmist say, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visiteth him?" *Psaln viii.* 3rd verse.) Above all, remember we have immortal souls dwelling in these bodies—souls which are a spark of life, and must exist to all eternity.

The day will soon arrive, when we shall feel that the chief business of this life, is to prepare for another and a better world. Then we shall find it signifieth little whether, in this life, we were rich or poor, learned or ignorant as to this world's wisdom; but the only thing worth our attention will be, whether we have come to the saving knowledge of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. I believe there never was, nor ever will be a person born into the world, to whom our Almighty Father is not willing to teach the nature of true religion: and if multitudes pass through life without knowing it, it is because they have rebelled against that inward conviction which would have led them to a knowledge of themselves, and awakened desires after an acquaintance with God. If then so many may be said to be ignorant of their duty, the fault is their own: for, if they have but a sincere desire of knowing what is right, that gracious God, who knows our most se-

cret thoughts, will lift up the light of his countenance on their souls. The Saviour himself sufficiently assured his followers, that none, at last, would be able to plead ignorance as an excuse for the neglect of their duty. The apostle tells us, "the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to *all* men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (*Titus* ii. 11, 12.) Now all who obey these *first* teachings, will find an increasing wish to be more and more taught of God; and, as they yield to this inward something, which pleads with, and admonishes them in the secret of their hearts, they will discover that they have been mercifully visited by God, with his "Day spring from on high." They will know what the apostle meant when he declared, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and heart." (*Rom.* x. 8th.) And what the blessed Redeemer meant by "The kingdom of God is within you."

It is indeed the privilege of the religion of Jesus Christ, (the gospel dispensation under which we live,) that there is not an absolute *necessity* for the teaching of men, in order to comprehend those truths which relate to the salvation of our souls. The prophet Jeremiah, who lived many hundred years before the appearance of our Saviour amongst men, was commanded by the Almighty to describe the gospel-day in this manner, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: not according to the covenant I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, &c. But this shall be the covenant that I will make, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord;" for they shall all know me: from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. (*Je-*

remiah chap. xxxi. verse 31, &c.) If when you feel the secret checks of that Divine Teacher, who reproves you whenever you do wrong, you would yield to what he requires, you would feel the reward of peace in your hearts; a peace promised by the Saviour of the world to his obedient children - Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you," &c. (*John* xiv. 27.)

This will be putting the precepts of the christian religion in practice. But though it is a great favour to read or to hear the instructive truths contained in the Scriptures, yet this will be to no purpose if you do not *obey* as well as hear them. The apostle Paul tells us, (*2 Cor.* iv. 6.) that "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts. to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The more we attend to the discoveries of this Divine Light, the more we feel that there is much in our hearts which wants to be enlightened, and cleansed from evil. Then we shall learn, that the soul stands in need of something to support and nourish it as well as the body; and that as the soul is immortal, its food must be spiritual. We shall then hear, and joyfully understand, what the holy Redeemer said formerly, when he declared, "I am the bread of life. he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (*John* vi. 35) And again, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life." (*John* viii. 12)

This then is the condemnation, that light is come into the world. but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. (*John* iii. 19.) The evil deeds of men make them prefer darkness to light. They are not desirous in general, to accept of, and benefit by the remedy provided by the infinite love of God; they are not sufficiently concerned to walk while *they* have the light. It ever was, and ever will be the language of the gracious Redeemer, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. (*Isaiah* xiv. 22.)

“Come unto me all you who labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (*Matt. xi. 28.*) Do not then, I earnestly and affectionately entreat you, do not deceive yourselves, by thinking since God is merciful, that you need not be anxious about your present conduct or future state. This would be a dreadful error indeed. It is true that Jesus, the Redeemer of his people, has laid down his life for us, that we might depart from evil, and stand accepted in the Divine sight; that we may be delivered from the bondage of sin and satan, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons and daughters of God; but if we would profit by these proofs of his love, we must accept of his salvation on the terms he offers it; we must be his true disciples by forsaking sin, and endeavouring to do the will of God upon earth as it is done in heaven. Remember, we cannot enter the kingdom of everlasting rest, to join the celestial company of saints and angels, till we have learned to lament our past transgressions, and have suffered the blessed Saviour of the world to cleanse our hearts from evil, that they may be filled with the graces of the Holy Spirit. He has given us all a time for repentance; he has offered us the means of being saved in him, with an everlasting salvation; but if we neglect these means, if we suffer this day of gracious visitation to pass away unimproved, dreadful indeed will be our state.

Recollect you are *now* in *time*, *to-morrow* you may be in *eternity*! Work then while it is day: for the night cometh wherein no man can work. The blessed Jesus himself declared, in effect, to the Jews, If ye believe not that I am, and die in your sins, whither I go you cannot come. (*John viii. 21, 24.*)

Do not think that you are sufficiently prepared for eternity, if you go to some place of worship, and abstain from gross sins; for if you become acquainted with your own hearts, through that grace with which the Almighty mercifully visits the children of men, you will be humble under a sense of his goodness, and your own unworthiness; you

will then become of the number of those whom he hath blessed, saying, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (*Matt. v. 3. 4.*)

And you dear young people, who may read these lines, let me, in real desire for your happiness, invite you to remember your Creator in the days of your youth; remember that he sees all your actions, and knows all your thoughts; that without his blessing you cannot really prosper; you could not be happy, even if you possessed all this world contains. It is only by knowing and serving the Lord that you can have peace; for, "There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." (*Isa. lvii. 21.*) Be encouraged then, to look up to your heavenly Father as your best friend: He hath assured us, They that seek wisdom early shall find her. (*Prov. viii.*) Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened. (*Matt. vii. 7.*)

The blessed Jesus received little children, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!" At the same time he declared, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." (*Mark x. 14, 15.*) Be humble then, be simple, be obedient to the teachings of Him, who will be as a Shepherd to the little ones of his flock. Do not continue in the practice of any thing, which, when you have done it, brings uneasiness over your minds, but follow those things that make for your peace; this attention to *small* things is the way to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He that is faithful in the *little*, will be made ruler over more. To-day then, O! to-day, if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts; hear and obey and your souls shall live!

FINIS.

LETTER

FROM

WILLIAM PENN,

TO HIS

WIFE AND CHILDREN.

NO. 12.

New-York :

PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,

No. 372, Pearl-street.

.....

1823.

Advertisement.

The Author of the following Letter is well known as the founder of Pennsylvania. The letter was written about the time he embarked for America. On being lately republished in a life of William Penn, by Thomas Clarkson, it attracted notice as a performance fraught with instructive counsel; and is now for the convenience of those who may not possess the above work, reprinted in a separate form.

LONDON, 1814.

A LETTER, &c.

MY DEAR WIFE AND CHILDREN,

My love, which neither sea nor land, nor death itself, can extinguish or lessen towards you, most endearedly visits you with eternal embraces and will abide with you forever: and may the God of my life watch over you, and bless you, and do you good in this world and for ever! Some things are upon my spirit to leave with you in your respective capacities, as I am to one a husband, and to the rest a father, if I should never see you more in this world.

My dear wife! Remember thou wast the love of my youth, and much the joy of my life, the most beloved, as well as the most worthy of all my earthly comforts: and the reason of that love was more thy inward than thy outward excellencies, which yet were many. God knows, and thou knowest it, I can say it was a match of Providence's making: and God's image in us both was the first thing, and the most amiable and engaging ornament in our eyes. Now I am to leave thee, and that without knowing whether I shall ever see thee more in this world, take my counsel into thy bosom, and let it dwell with thee in my stead while thou livest.

First: Let the fear of the Lord, and a zeal and love to his glory dwell richly in thy heart; and thou wilt

watch for good over thyself, and thy dear children and family, that no rude, light, or bad thing be committed : else God will be offended, and he will repent himself of the good he intends thee and thine.

Secondly : Be diligent in meetings for worship and discipline ; stir up thyself and others herein ; it is thy duty and place ; and let meetings be kept once a day in the family to wait upon the Lord, who has given us much time for ourselves ; and, my dearest, to make thy family matters easy to thee, divide thy time and be regular : it is easy and sweet ; thy retirement will afford thee to do it ; as in the morning to view the business of the house, and fix it as thou desirest, seeing all be in order ; that by thy counsel all may move, and to thee render an account every evening. The time for work, for walking, for meals, should be fixed, at least as near as may be : and grieve not thyself with careless servants ; they will disorder thee ; rather pay them and let them go, if they will not be better by admonitions. It is best to avoid many words, which I know wound the soul, and offend the Lord.

Thirdly : Cast up thy income, and see what it daily amounts to ; by which thou mayst be sure to have it in thy sight and power, to keep within compass : and I beseech thee to live low and sparingly, till my debts are paid, and then enlarge as thou seest it convenient. Remember thy mother's example when thy father's public spiritedness had worsted his estate (which is my case.) I know thou lovest plain things, and art averse to the pomps of the world ; a nobility natural to thee. I write not as doubtful, but to quicken thee, for my sake to be more vigilant herein ; knowing that God will bless thy care, and thy poor children and thee for it. My mind is wrapt up in a saying of thy father's, " I desire not riches, but to owe nothing : " and truly *that* is wealth : and more than enough to live, is a snare attended with many sorrows. I need not bid thee be humble, for thou art so ; nor meek and patient, for it is much thy natural disposition ; but I pray thee be

oft in retirement with the Lord, and guard against encroaching friendships. Keep them at arms' end, for it is giving away our power, aye, and self too, into the possession of another ; and that which seems engaging in the beginning, may prove a yoke and burden too hard and heavy in the end. Wherefore keep dominion over thyself, and let thy children, good meetings, and friends, be the pleasure of thy life.

Fourthly : And now my dearest, let me recommend to thy care, my dear children ; abundantly beloved of me, as the Lord's blessings, and the sweet pledges of our mutual and endeared affection. Above all things, endeavour to bring them up in the love of virtue, and that holy plain way of it which we have lived in, that the world in no part of it get into my family. I had rather they were homely than finely bred, as to outward behaviour ; yet I love sweetness mixed with gravity, and cheerfulness tempered with sobriety. Religion in the heart, leads into this true civility, teaching men and women to be mild and courteous in their behaviour, an accomplishment worthy indeed of praise.

Fifthly : Next, teach them to love one another ; tell them it is the charge I left behind me ; and that it is the way to have the love and blessing of God upon them ; also, what his portion is, who hates, or calls his brother fool. Sometimes separate them, but not long ; and allow them to send and give each other small things, to endear one another with. Once more I say, tell them, it was my counsel they should be tender and affectionate one to another. For their learning, be liberal. Spare no cost, for by such parsimony, all is lost that is saved ; but let it be *useful* knowledge, such as is consistent with truth and godliness, not cherishing a vain conversation or idle mind ; but ingenuity mixed with industry, is good for the body and mind too. I recommend the useful parts of mathematics, as building houses or ships, measuring, surveying, dialling, navigation ; but agriculture is especially in my eye. Let my children be husbandmen

and housewives; like Abraham and the holy Ancients, who pleased God and obtained a good report. Such employment is industrious, healthy, honest, and of good example. It leads to consider the works of God and nature, things that are good; and diverts the mind from being taken up with the vain arts and inventions of a luxurious world. It is commendable in the princes of Germany, and the nobles of that empire, that they have all their children instructed in some useful occupation. Rather keep an ingenious person in the house to teach them, than send them to schools; too many evil impressions being commonly received there. Be sure to observe their genius, and do not cross it as to learning. Let them not dwell too long on one thing; but let their change be agreeable, and all their diversions have some little bodily labour in them. When grown big, have most care for them; for then there are more snares both within and without. When marriageable, see that they have worthy persons in their eye, of good life, and good fame for piety and understanding. I need no wealth, but sufficiency; and be sure their love be dear, fervent, and mutual, that it may be happy for them. I choose not they should be married to earthly covetous kindred; and of cities and towns of concourse beware: the world is apt to stick close to those who have lived, and got wealth there; a country life and estate I like best for my children. I prefer a decent mansion of an hundred pounds per annum, before ten thousand pounds in London, or such like place, in a way of trade. In fine, my dear, endeavour to breed them dutiful to the Lord, and his blessed light, truth and grace, in their hearts, and his fear will grow up with them. "Train up a child," says the wise man, "in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Next, inculcate obedience to thee, their dear mother, and that not for wrath, but for conscience sake; liberal to the poor, pitiful to the miserable, humble and kind to all. And may my God make thee a blessing, and give thee comfort in our dear children;

and in age, gather thee to the joy and blessedness of the just (where no death shall separate us) for ever !

And now, my dear children, who are the gifts of the God of your tender father, hear my counsel and lay it up in your hearts ; love it more than treasure ; and follow it and you shall be blessed here, and happy hereafter. In the first place, remember your Creator in the days of your youth. It was the glory of Israel, as expressed in the second of Jeremiah : and how did God bless Josiah, because he feared him in his youth ! and so he did Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. O my dear children, remember, and fear, and serve him who made you, and gave you to me and your dear mother, that you may live to him, and glorify him in your generation !

To do this in your youthful days, seek after the Lord, that you may find him ; remembering his great love in creating you ; that you are not beasts, plants, or stones, but that he has kept you, and given you his grace within, and substance without, and provided plentifully for you. This remember in your youth, that you may be kept from the evil of the world ; for, in age, it will be harder to overcome the temptations of it.

Wherefore, my dear children, eschew the appearance of evil, and love and cleave to that in your hearts, which shows you evil from good, and tells you when you do amiss, and reproves you for it. It is the light of Christ, that he has given you for your salvation. If you do this, and follow my counsel, God will bless you in this world, and give you an inheritance in that which shall never have an end. For the light of Jesus is of a purifying nature ; it seasons those who love it and take heed to it ; and never leaves such, till it has brought them to the City of God, that has foundations. O that ye may be seasoned with the gracious nature of it ! Hide it in your hearts, and flee, my dear children, from all youthful lusts ; the vain sports, pastimes, and pleasure of the world ; redeeming the time, because the days are evil !—You are now beginning to live.—What would some give for your

time? Oh! I could have lived better, were I, as you, in the flower of youth.—Therefore love and fear the Lord; keep close to meetings, and delight to wait on the Lord God of your father and mother, among his despised people, as we have done; and count it your honour to be members of that Society, and heirs of that living fellowship which is enjoyed among them; for the experience of which, your father's soul blesseth the Lord forever.

Next: be obedient to your dear mother, a woman whose virtue and good name is an honour to you; for she has been exceeded by none in her time for her plainness, integrity, industry, humanity, virtue, and good understanding; qualities not usual among women of her worldly condition and rank. Therefore, honour and obey her, my dear children, as your mother, and your father's love and delight; nay, love her too: for she loved your father with a deep and upright love, choosing him before all her many suitors; and though she was of a delicate constitution and noble spirit, yet she descended to the utmost tenderness and care for you, performing the most painful acts of service to you in your infancy, as a mother and a nurse too. I charge you before the Lord, honour and obey, love and cherish your dear mother.

Next, betake yourselves to some honest industrious course of life, and that not of sordid covetousness, but for example, and avoid idleness. And if you change your condition and marry, choose with the knowledge and consent of your mother, if living, or of guardians, or those who have the charge of you. Mind neither beauty nor riches, but the fear of the Lord, and a sweet and amiable disposition; such as you can love above all this world, and that may make your habitations pleasant and desirable to you.

And being married, be tender, affectionate, patient, and meek. Live in the fear of the Lord, and he will bless you and your offspring. Be sure to live within compass: borrow not, neither be beholden to any. Ruin not yourselves by kindness to others; for that exceeds the due

bounds of friendship ; neither will a true friend expect it. Small matters I heed not.

Let your industry and parsimony go no farther than for a sufficiency for life, and to make a provision for your children, (and that in moderation,) if the Lord gives you any. I charge you help the poor and needy ; let the Lord have a voluntary share of your income, for the good of the poor, both in our Society and others ; for we are all his creatures ; remembering that, " he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

Know well your in-comings ; that your out-goings may be the better regulated. Love not money, nor the world ; use them only, and they will serve you ; but if you love them, you serve them, which will debase your spirits, as well as offend the Lord.

Pity the distressed, and hold out a hand of help to them : affliction may be your lot ; and as you mete to others, God will mete to you again.

Be humble and gentle in your conversation, of few words, I charge you : but always pertinent when you speak, hearing out before you attempt to answer, and then speak as if you would persuade, not impose.

Affront none, neither revenge the affronts that are done to you ; but forgive, and you shall be forgiven of your heavenly Father.

In making friends, consider well first ; and when you are fixed, be true, not wavering by reports, nor deserting in affliction, for that becomes not the good and virtuous. Watch against anger, neither speak nor act in it : for, like drunkenness, it makes a man a beast, and throws people into many inconveniencies.

Avoid flatterers, for they are thieves in disguise, their praise is costly, designing to get by those they bespeak ; they are the worst of creatures ; they lie to flatter, and flatter to cheat ; and, which is worse, if you believe them, you cheat yourselves most dangerously. But the virtuous, though poor, love, cherish, and prefer. Remember that David, asking the Lord, who shall abide in thy tab-

bernacle ? who shall dwell upon thy holy hill ? answers, He that walketh uprightly, worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart ; in whose eyes the vile person is contemned, but who honoureth them who fear the Lord. Next my children, be temperate in all things : in your diet, for that is physic by prevention ; it keeps, nay, it makes people healthy, and their generation sound. This is exclusive of the spiritual advantage it brings. Be also plain in your apparel. Keep out that lust which reigns too much over some. Let your virtues be your ornaments ; remembering life is more than food, and the body than raiment. Let your furniture be simple and cheap. Avoid pride, avarice and luxury. Read my 'No Cross No Crown.' There is instruction !

Make your conversation with the most eminent for wisdom and piety ; and shun all wicked men as you hope for the blessing of God, and the comfort of your father's living and dying prayers. Be sure you speak no evil of any, no, not of the meanest ; much less of your superiors, as, magistrates, guardians, tutors, teachers, and elders in Christ.

Be not busy-bodies ; meddle not with other folks' matters, but when in conscience and duty pressed : for it procures trouble, and is ill manners, and very unseemly to wise men.

In your families, remember Abraham, Moses, and Joshua, their integrity to the Lord ; and do as you have them for your examples.

Let the fear and service of the living God be encouraged in your houses ; and that plainness, sobriety, and moderation in all things, which becometh God's chosen people. And as I advised you my beloved children, do you counsel yours, if God should give you any ; yea, I counsel and command them as my posterity. that they love and serve the Lord God with an upright heart ; that he may bless you and yours, from generation to generation.

And as for you, who are likely to be concerned in the

government of Pennsylvania, and my parts of East Jersey, especially the first, I do charge you, before the Lord God and his holy Angels, that you be lowly, diligent and tender ; fearing God, and loving the people, and hating covetousness. Let Justice have its impartial course, and the Law free passage. Though to your loss, protect no man against it ; for you are not above the law, but the law above you. Live therefore, the lives yourselves, you would have the people live, and then you have right and boldness to punish the transgressors. Keep upon the square, for God sees you : therefore do your duty ; and be sure you see with your own eyes and hear with your own ears. Entertain no lurchers, cherish no interested informers ; use no tricks ; fly to no devices to support or cover injustice ; but let your hearts be upright before the Lord, trusting in him, above the contrivances of men, and none shall be able to hurt or supplant.

Oh ! the Lord is a strong God, and he can do whatsoever he pleases ; and though men consider it not, it is the Lord that rules and over-rules in the Kingdoms of men, and he builds up and pulls down. I, your father, am the man that can say, He that trusts in the Lord shall not be confounded ; but God, in due time, will make his enemies be at peace with him.

If you thus behave yourselves, and so become a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well, God, my God, will be with you in wisdom and a sound mind, and make you blessed instruments in His hand, for the settlement of some of those desolate parts of the world : and this my soul desires, above all worldly honours and riches, both for you that go and you that stay ; you that govern, and you that are governed ; that in the end you may be gathered, with me, to the rest of God.

Finally, my children, love one another, with a true endeared love, and your dear relations on both sides ; and take care to preserve tender affection in your children to each other, often marrying within themselves, so as it be without the bounds forbidden in God's law, that

so they may not, like the forgetting unnatural world, grow out of kindred, and as cold as strangers ; but, as become a truly natural and Christian stock, you, and yours after you, may live in the pure and fervent love of God towards one another, as becometh brethren in the spiritual and natural relation.

So my God that hath blessed me with his abundant mercies, both of this and the other and better life, be with you all, guide you by his counsel, bless you, and bring you to his eternal glory ! that you may shine, my dear children, in the firmament of God's power, with the blessed spirits of the just, that celestial family, praising and admiring him, the God and Father of all forever and ever. For there is no God like unto him ; the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of the Prophets, the Apostles, and Martyrs, and of Jesus, in whom I live forever.

So farewell to my thrice dearly beloved wife and children.

Yours, as God pleaseth, in that which no waters can quench, no time impair, no distance wear away, but remains forever.

WILLIAM PENN.

*Worminghurst,
4th of Sixth Month, 1682.*

THE
Ancient Christians'

PRINCIPLE,

OR

RULE OF LIFE.

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THE

ANCIENT CHRISTIANS' PRINCIPLE, &c.

THE life and nature of Christ, all true Christians, who have the Spirit of Christ, may find in themselves; and others may have some sense thereof by reading and well considering the contents of the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew, where it is said, that Jesus "seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them." What he taught his disciples then, he teacheth all true Christians now: though he ascended, the Holy Spirit that dwelt in him descended, and did then, doth now, and to the end of the world will tabernacle with all the Lord's redeemed to be their Teacher; and as many as walk after this Spirit, are taught of Christ, and walk in his footsteps; for as no vine beareth one kind of grape, and the branches another, so all the members of Christ answer the life of Christ in their conversation; they are humble, lowly, meek, merciful, patient, peaceable, just, upright, honest, and faithful. A Christian is not known by his words, but by his works, his nature, his life, and his conversation.

The true trial of our Christianity is to be found

in the life and nature of Christ ; if the Spirit of Christ hath the rule in us, these following fruits will be brought forth by us :

First. In all our communication, our yea will be yea, and our nay, nay : the word that goeth out of our lips will be sure.

He that is a Christian indeed, hath no necessity in himself, nor need to be urged by others, to bind his soul with an oath to perform his word ; for the law of the Spirit of life in his own heart constrains him so to do.

Christians, in their communications, weigh their words, before they utter them, with their capacities to perform them : knowing that a promise cannot be broken without violating the righteous law of God in our own hearts. Whenever such violence is done, terror ensues ; and this makes good men, who live under the government of Christ, dread much more to break their words, than others do to forfeit their bonds. This holy dread makes our yea to be yea, and our nay to be nay ; this makes us cautious in our promises, and careful in our performances. The exhortation may be read in scripture, but the binding tie must be known in our own hearts. All that have the scripture have this rule : but unless we have a principle of life in ourselves, we cannot walk by this rule : and we must not only have such a principle, but we must also improve it by a continued practice, before it comes to be our life, our centre, and our nature ; till then we may say, 'These things we *should* do ;' but cannot say, 'These things we *do* ;' and so witness against ourselves that, though we have the scriptures, we walk not according to the scriptures ; though we have

the words of Christ, we are not in the life and nature of Christ ; our yea is not yea, and our nay, nay, in our communication ; our words and our promises are not steadfast and sure.

A second exhortation or command of our Lord was this, "Resist not evil ;" and this was not only his doctrine, but his life and nature, as we may plentifully read in scripture. Though he met with revilings, reproaches, buffetings, and cruel usage, we do not find that he was once moved thereby, much less that ever he resisted ; but gave his face to the smiter, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair ; and when he was lead as a lamb to the slaughter, ' he was as a sheep dumb before the shearer ; he opened not his mouth.'

Now the fruits of the Spirit, in the Head and members, are one in nature ; for as Christ was humble, lowly, meek, patient, peaceable, under all his sufferings, so are Christians, if Christians indeed : they render not evil for evil, they desire not an eye for an eye, nor a tooth for a tooth ; revenge of any kind is far from them ; but as patience and forbearance was the life and nature of Christ, so it is the life and nature of all Christians, as they grow in grace, and come to the fulness of the stature of Christ.

And by this also, professors of Christianity may prove themselves, whether they are Christians indeed ; for it is the deed that manifesteth all things : bad men may have good words ; forms may be imitated, but the patience, the meekness, the forbearance that dwelt in Christ, and may be found [in degree] in all true Christians, cannot be imitated.

A third exhortation or command of Christ was this, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you,

do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

This also was not only the doctrine, but the life and nature of Christ, and as it is the life and nature of Christ, so it is the life and nature of Christians, who are thoroughly leavened with the Spirit of Christ.

No man, having the Spirit of Jesus, and living under the government thereof, can hate the person of any man; for by creation, we are all the workmanship of God's hands; and all true Christians know that enmity, hatred, cursing, spite and persecution, proceed not from men, as they are the Lord's creation, but as they have lost this image, and thereby become emptied of good, and filled with all evil: for as an evil spirit comes to have the rule over us, evil fruits will be brought forth by us.

Could we but see ourselves, did we but observe our own natures, with the fruits we bring forth in our lives, we might easily judge of ourselves whether we were converts or not; whether the Spirit of Christ or the spirit of this world, had the rule in us, and over us; for the course of our lives, especially in times of trial, declares who are led by the meek spirit of Jesus, and who are not; who are leavened with the leaven of righteousness, and who are not; who lead a sober, upright, godly life, and who do not; it is not our words, but our conversation, [or lives] that manifest what spirit hath the rule in us and over us.

For until by conversion, our natures come to be changed, we cannot love enemies, having as much enmity against them, as they have against us; we cannot bless them, we cannot pray for them, we shall be forward to do them hurt, but far from doing them good.

Come professors of Christianity, measure yourselves by this line, try yourselves by this touchstone ; are you reduced to such a frame of spirit as to “ love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you ?”—This is a true character of Christianity.

A fourth branch of life, nature, and doctrine of Christ was manifested in these words, “ Take no thought* for your life what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on ; but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

As many as have found the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and are come to live under the rule and government of a right Spirit, have the mind of Christ ; though they live in the world, their thoughts run not out after the world. A true Christian is diligent in his calling, moderate in his expences, content in his state ; takes but little thought what he shall eat, or what he shall drink, or wherewithal he shall be clothed ; he delights in justice, equity, truth, and faithfulness, and his thoughts are exercised therein, and resting on God’s providence, his honest endeavours, are attended with a blessing.

Ungodly men seek the world first, I may say, first and last ; the riches of the world, the honour of the world, the pleasures of the world, and the praise of the world : ‘ What they shall eat, or what they shall drink,’ to please their appetites ; ‘ What they shall put on,’ to be accounted great in the world, and to have the pre-eminence above and before their fel-

{* Rather, *Be not anxious*. This is a more correct translation.

low-creatures : their thoughts run far more, how they shall be conformable to the fashions of the world, than how they shall be conformable to the life, nature and doctrine of Christ.

This is the natural state of the sons and daughters of men, whilst they continue in a state of degeneracy, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to that covenant of promise that the Lord made with the house of Jacob. And to a better state none can come, but by seeking and finding the kingdom of God and his righteousness, or the rule and government of Christ, by his eternal Spirit in their own hearts. There the seed is sown : there the leaven is laid : there the pearl of great price is found, but not without digging deep : for while vice is uppermost, virtue is lowermost ; whilst sin reigns, the power or dominion of grace is not felt : the bringing down of the one is the exaltation of the other. There must be a death unto sin, before there can be a new birth unto righteousness ; and there must be a new birth unto righteousness, and a growth in righteousness, before we can centre in that content as to ‘ take no thought what we shall eat, what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed.’ And so it is every man’s principal concern, first to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; first to know the rule and government of a right Spirit in himself ; for this makes him capable of leading a Christian life, and of performing Christian duties both to God and man.

The fifth and last branch of the life, nature, and doctrine of Christ, that I shall here insist upon, is this, “ All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets.”

This doing is accounted by many zealous professors of Christianity, in our present age, a moral righteousness, and so but a small part, or rather no part, of true godliness ; but, rightly considered, all actual righteousness, if it proceeds from a right spirit, is in itself the true righteousness of faith.

Were the understandings of all who are called Christians, enlightened to see themselves as they are, to prove themselves by this Christian rule, weigh themselves in this equal balance, the following sorts of men and women, with many others, would no more pass for true Christians.

As first, all who in suits of law, by perverting justice, or other subtle contrivances, possess themselves of houses, lands, or goods, that they have no right unto.

Secondly, all such as by violent robbing, or private stealing, take that which is not their own.

Thirdly, all such as detain the wages of the labourer, or grind the poor, by beating down the value of their labour till they cannot live thereby.

Fourthly, all such as in trade or dealing, use light weights, short measure, or any kind of deceit.

Fifthly, all such as either give or take bribes.

Sixthly, all such as take wages to serve, and are not faithful to their trust.

Sevently, all such as make contracts, and perform not the same ; or engage themselves by promises, and have no regard to their word.

Eighthly, all such as by evil reports, whisperings, or backbitings, sow the seeds of strife, create prejudice, or quench charity.

None of these abide in the doctrines of Christ, none of these do as they would be done unto ; though they bear a Christian name, they are strangers to a Christian life.

By what way may the proud become humble, the wild become sober, the covetous become content, the fraudulent become just, the intemperate become moderate, the incontinent become chaste, the unfaithful become faithful? I know many will say, By hearing good ministers, reading good books, and conferring with good men.

By hearing good ministers, reading good books, and conferring with good men, we may be convicted, but not thoroughly converted : for as virtue hath a spring, so vice hath a root that words will not reach. The strength of sin is the growth of that seed which the wicked one hath sown in the inward parts of the sons and daughters of men ; and forasmuch as the cause is within, it is impossible it should be wholly removed by things without : as the cause is within, so the cure must be within, by mortifying the body of sin, or bringing down the strength thereof ; which is thus effected :

There is no unrighteous thing done, but there is an inward motion before there is any outward action ; and, by that light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, if our eyes are inward, we may see those motions ; and the way to mortify the body of sin, is to deny and turn from every such motion in the rising thereof ; for in their rising they are weak and powerless, and may be easily turned back. If we do not suppress vice in the risings thereof, it will continue our lord ; but by every such denial, we bring down that which would arise and reign in us and over us, whether it be pride, covetousness, envy, falsehood, or any other vice whatever : for the more denials are given to vice, the fewer assaults it will make ; the stronger the opposition, the weaker the attempt. As yielding

gives vice ground to grow from a seed to a body, denials bring it down from a body to a seed ; so that though something thereof may abide in us, it doth not reign over us.

The axe is never laid to the root of the tree, till a reformation begins within ; the life of righteousness stands [or has its rise] in the mortification of sin, which is an inward work. The spirit of this world must be brought down, before the Spirit of the Lord can be exalted in us.

And as they that live after the flesh, have less life, less light, less grace, less fear ; so, such as walk after the Spirit, doing such things as are upright, honest, and of good report, from a principle in their own hearts, find an increase ; they come to have more life, more light, more grace, more fear of offending God or their neighbour ; and this increase is a living unto righteousness. As the one goes further from, so the other draws nearer to the kingdom of heaven.

Now a talent is not improved by lying hid in a napkin ; if we would have more grace, we must exercise the measure we have attained unto ; we must live in the continual practice of right things ; we must keep in lowliness, meekness, temperance, patience, and other virtues ; we must be just in our dealings, as well in the smallest concern as in those which are more weighty ; for a small matter turns the balance, and if that small matter be wanting, things are not just, we do not as we would be done by.

And this just dealing, as righteousness comes to reign, will be no hard thing, for as we accustom ourselves thereunto, it will be uppermost ; it will be as a diligent handmaid, ready to offer her service ; and every act of righteousness performed in a right

spirit, hath its reward, which is not only an answer of peace, but joy in the Holy Ghost.

The way of life is the way of pleasantness, all her paths are peace. At the beginning of our journey, it will seem a straight and narrow way ; but after we have travelled on awhile, we shall run therein with great delight. For the kingdom of heaven, or Christ's government by his eternal Spirit in the hearts of his people, doth not consist of righteousness alone : the righteousness that proceeds from a right spirit, is accompanied with peace and joy. As ill-doing is attended with trouble and sorrow, well-doing is attended with peace and joy. All the pleasures of wickedness, that the whole world affords, are not to be compared to the joys of a righteous life. Every evil motion that we deny, in obedience unto Christ, affordeth a superior joy to that which a warrior hath in battle, when his enemy fleeth before him.

I cannot recommend myself, or any other, to any better way for the reforming of our lives, than to turn in our eye to the gift of God in ourselves, that by his candle [or light] we may see the risings of vice, and so deny it : that the contrary, which is grace and truth, may arise and reign in us ; for that is our help, that is our strength, and that is our defence.

Many have been awakened from the sleep of sin, and have had in themselves a true hunger and thirst after righteousness ; who being awakened by an outward ministry, from *that* expected to have their hunger and thirst satisfied : but "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." What can satisfy a soul that thirsteth after righteousness, but that which is in very truth the spring of righteousness ? It is in our

selves the well is to be found, that whosoever drinketh of shall never thirst; *there* is the spring that floweth up unto everlasting life.

As the kingdom of heaven stands not in words, but in power; so it is not words, but the power of God that can mortify the deeds of the body, change our nature, and make us new creatures.

Did the sons and daughters of men who are called Christians, make it their concern to be Christians indeed, by mortifying in themselves the spirit of this world, which is the origin of all vice, they would be not only a happy, but a lovely people; for by mortifying the body of sin, oppression would cease, all wrongs and injuries would be at an end; love would spring both to God and man; grace would grow; humility, meekness, moderation and all other virtues would show themselves. They would be another manner of people in their conversation; their words and their works would be just, upright and honest; they would confide in one another without any scruple or doubt.—What is more lovely than to be at all times, and on all occasions, just, upright, honest, and faithful, doing to all men, in all things whatsoever, even as we would that they should do unto us! Living under the rule and government of a right spirit, qualifies us for performing every Christian duty: “We shall love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and our neighbours as ourselves; which is the sum of all godliness, and the true character of Christianity.

FINIS.

ON THE

PEACE OF GOD,

WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.



No. 14.



NEW-YORK ;

TO BE HAD AT THE BOOKSTORE OF MANLON DAY.



1823.

ON THE PEACE OF GOD, &c.



A GENERAL prospect of human life, presents a scene of turbulence, of which the troubled ocean is an emblem. But there is a sweet, a peaceable, a tranquil state of self-possession, whether external circumstances are prosperous or adverse, which constitutes the most solid happiness of which human nature is capable. This enjoyment, arising from moderate desires, a regulated imagination, lively hopes, and full confidence in the Deity, is that *chief good*, which philosophers have vainly sought in the schools, by the strongest efforts of unassisted reason. What then can point it out, if *reason*, improved by science to the highest degree, has not been able to find it? The answer is obvious. The religion of Jesus Christ offers to its sincere votaries the PEACE OF GOD *which passeth all understanding*; a kind and degree of happiness, which no language can clearly express; which the understanding cannot adequately conceive, though the heart can *feel* it, with the most delightful experience.

“The peace of God,” says the world, “what is it?” They know it not. Many have no conception of happiness, independent of external circumstances; the toys of childhood, protracted to age. They do not search for it *in themselves*, but in the eyes of the world. All their enjoyments must be violent, sensual, or, at least, OSTENTATIOUS. Admire

pers exhibit their names in capitals, and fashion crowd to their door; let their equipage be splendid, and their mansions magnificent, their egress and regress recorded in the daily histories, or they sicken in the midst of health; they pine in the midst of abundance; the rose on their bosom loses its fragrance; the honey on their palates its flavour. To be *celebrated*, even for folly, even for vice, is to them an enviable NOTORIETY; to be unnoticed in public circles, infuses a bitter into all those sweets, which God in his bounty has lavished.

But the felicity arising from the PEACE OF GOD, is neither the tumultuous ecstasy of the fanatic, nor the noisy merriment of the prodigal. It seeks no plaudits: it makes no parade. It blazes not out like the sudden eruptions of a volcano; but burns like the vestal fires, clear and constant, with a warmth that invigorates, without scorching; with a light that illuminates, without dazzling.

Thus desirable, how is the PEACE OF GOD to be obtained? It is an important question. Let us enter on the research. If we enter on it with dispositions truly humble and sincere, there is little doubt but we shall experience the truth of that comfortable declaration: "Ask and it shall be given; seek and ye shall find."

What said the wisdom of pagan antiquity, on the means of securing PEACE, or tranquillity? Much that was plausible; little to the purpose.

It was the advice of an ancient philosopher: "Subject thyself to reason, and thou shalt be reduced to no other subjection." Experience, however, has evinced, that human reason, under a variety of circumstances, is too weak and fallible to be depended upon for the full security of human happiness. What he vainly attributed to reason, may with justice be ascribed to religion.

Religion, duly understood, and duly attended to, is capable of giving much of that freedom from passion and perturbation, to which philosophy in vain pretended. Not that I mean to arrogate too much, or claim more than truth and experience will allow, even in favour of religion. While man preserves the nature which God gave him, he must continue subject to the transient impulse of those sensations from external objects which excite passion, and disturb repose.

All I contend for is, that religion, **VITAL RELIGION**, the religion of the **HEART**, is the most powerful auxiliary, in waging war with the passions, and promoting that sweet composure which constitutes the peace of God. Reason may point out what is right, but she wants **AUTHORITY** in the minds of most men, to enforce obedience to her commands. Here religion steps in with majestic mien, and gives the sanction of a law to the dictates of discretion.

I recommend, therefore, to him who wishes to obtain the peace of God, a *diffidence* in human reason, however strong by nature, and however improved by study. A confidence in it, leads to that pride which God resisteth. But I mean this *diffidence* to be chiefly confined to the operations of reason in *religious* disquisitions. Things *above* reason are not to be rejected as *contrary* to reason, but to be received with a reverential awe, and a devout submission of the understanding to the God who gave it.

He, then, who wishes to tranquillize his bosom, must have recourse to more powerful medicines than those of philosophy. Philosophy has been tried from the earliest ages to the present hour, with little success. She is cold and inactive. She may influence and direct the understanding; but she cannot warm the affections with the love of God and virtue.

—mida

or regulate even the virtuous passions; and no sentiment is so efficacious for this purpose as the *devotional*. *The word of God*, as the strong language of the scripture expresses it, is *quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

From shallow streams, we must hasten to the living fountain of the Christian religion. It is the influence of God on the heart of man, the divine operation of the Holy Spirit on the spirit of human creatures, which alone can bestow a *permanent* tranquillity; that peace of God, that passeth all understanding; that peace which no human eloquence can clearly explain; which no human sagacity can, by its own unassisted efforts, procure; but which the devout heart of the believer feels with joy and gratitude.

Let us then take a view of the fruits of the Spirit, as they are beautifully described by the Apostle. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.*—These lovely virtues have a natural tendency to produce equanimity, self-possession, a serene, placid, delightful frame of mind, such as the sages of old conceived, indeed, but could not either procure or communicate. These make an earth a Heaven, and render it evident, beyond a doubt, that the true Christian, after all the boasts of the gay voluptuary, is the real man of happiness.

The *worldly* man of pleasure is indeed, for the most part, a man of pleasure only in name. His pains, upon the whole greatly outweigh his pleasures; or his insensibility, contracted by excess, leaves him in the midst of all that luxury can spread before him, in a state very remote from enjoyment.

It would not be right to describe things in a de-

clamatory and rhetorical manner, so as to violate the truth of representation, for the sake of maintaining even the cause of religion. But experience will justify me in asserting, that the numerous tribes, in the gay and elevated circles, that pursue happiness in dissipation only, and never think of God, but to swear with levity by his name, exhibit many external signs of singular irritation; and public misery. They appear to have no resources in their own bosom. They depend on precarious externals, on the will and co-operation of others, for all their pleasures. CHANGES OF PLACE is their grand remedy for their uneasy sensations. Like a sick man, who turns from side to side on his bed, in hopes of that sleep which his fever denies, they fly to various scenes of public resort; in the midst of amusements, unamused; in the midst of pleasures, unpleased; and reluctantly return to their home, where God has given them a good inheritance. They have used, or rather abused, all their comforts. They are glutted with pleasure. Nothing has the grace of novelty to recommend it. Behold their dissatisfied countenances, and their artificial smiles, at the gay places of public amusement. Their appetite grown dull, this world affording no new joy, and the next never in their thoughts, they are, at first, the slaves of folly, and, at last, the victims of despair.

How different is it with him who has happily imbibed religion in his early age, and learned to seek, as his chief good, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding?" *Great peace have they that love thy law.* I do not affirm, that the Christian religion pretends, like the arrogant philosophy of the stoics, to place man out of the reach of evil, or to render him insensible of misery. A certain portion of evil and misery, is to be the lot of every mortal; and wise

to operate in its regular manner in the production of humility, godly sorrow, repentance, and amendment. But this I say, and am justified in the assertion by the Scriptures, and by the experience of many pious believers, that there is nothing which can lessen the evils of life so much, or teach a man to bear them with such fortitude, as a full dependence on God, and a habit of seeking pleasure in a warm yet rational devotion. This exalted pleasure will ever be found by those who seek it faithfully.

It is not, indeed, to be believed, but that God, whose Providence superintends the animal and vegetable world, and the inanimate creation, should watch over the spiritual, with peculiar care, and conduct it by his immediate influence. A soul, therefore, which by piety and charity, humbly endeavours to obey the revealed will of God, and to render itself acceptable to Him who is too pure to behold iniquity without offence, will be sure of his peculiar regard. No evil so great shall happen to it, no misfortune so heavy shall befall it, that a way to escape shall not be opened, or a supernatural power of bearing it be afforded. A ray of sunshine will beam upon it from the fountain of spiritual light, when the world presents nothing but dark clouds. Like the Alpine mountain, the good and devout Christian rises above the clouds, and enjoys a glorious sunshine, which erring mortals below him cannot partake. He who enjoys the peace of God, may be said to resemble the halcyon, whose nest floats on the glassy sea, undisturbed by the agitation of the waves.

Men deem themselves fortunate in obtaining the patronage of a fellow-creature like themselves, elevated, by the favour of a prince or by industry, above the common level. They feel themselves safe under his protection, from the evils of poverty. Yet what is the protection of man, of princes, of nobles, to the

protection of the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Ruler of princes? But the pious Christian believes firmly, that he enjoys the unspeakable advantage. It is a continual feast to him. It is a perennial spring of living water. In adversity or prosperity, his **CHIEF** good remains like the mountain, which cannot be moved. It is the rock of ages, on which he builds the fair fabric of his felicity.

What is there, in all the pomp of the world, the enjoyments of luxury, or the gratification of passions, comparable to the tranquil delight of a *good conscience*? *It is the health of the mind.* It is a sweet perfume that diffuses its fragrance on every thing near it, without exhausting its store. Unaccompanied with this, the gay pleasures of the world are like brilliants to a diseased eye, music to a deaf ear, wine in an ardent fever, or dainties in the languor of an ague. To lie down on the pillow, after a day spent in temperance, in beneficence, and piety, how sweet is it! How different from the state of him, who reclines at an unnatural hour, with his blood inflamed, his head throbbing with wine and gluttony, his heart aching with rancorous malice, his thoughts totally estranged from Him who has protected him in the day, and who will watch over him ungrateful as he is, in the night season! A good conscience is, indeed, the peace of God. Passions lulled to sleep, clear thoughts, cheerful temper, a disposition to be pleased with every obvious and innocent object around; these are the effects of a good conscience; these are the things which constitute happiness; and these condescend to dwell with the poor man, in his humble cottage in the vale of obscurity. In the magnificent mansion of the proud and vain, glitter the exteriors of happiness, the gilding, the trapping, the pride, and the pomp; but in the decent habitations of piety, is oft-

solid good, of which the parade of the vain, the frivolous, and the voluptuous, is but a shadowy semblance.

I see a crowd, travelling, by choice, on the day of rest appointed for man and beast, with a speed that almost outstrips the wind. Whither are they hastening? To the regions of delight; some place of modish resort; where the sound of the viol invites; where the song and the dance, and the festive board, promise pleasure. Join the train awhile, and mark the event. The variety of objects dissipate care for a short time; but weariness soon ensues, and satiety converts the promised pleasure to indifference at least, if not to pain. And now they return to their *home*, with countenances that by no means express *satisfaction* at what is just past; that satisfaction which might have been expected, considering the preparation, the expense, the haste, and the eagerness, which appeared in the commencement and progress of the fashionable excursion. Piety, charity, domestic comfort, have all been sacrificed at the shrine of Fashion; and the fickle, unfeeling *deity* has bestowed nothing in return, but weariness, languor, and a total disrelish of the pleasures of simplicity, the sweets of innocence, the feast of benevolence, and the enlivening ardour of devotion.

To contrast the scene, I picture a regular, respectable, religious *family*, spending their time, after the performance of their social, public, or professional duties, around the domestic fireside, in peace and love. Every countenance is illuminated with cheerfulness. No tedium, no exhausted spirits, no pale, ghastly visages, from the vigils of the card table; no envious feelings, no jealousy nor rage at the sight of superior splendour. Pleased with a wellspent day, before they retire to repose, they thank the Giver of all comfort for the mercies already received; and

pray, with humble confidence, for protection
night, and continuance of mercy during the
der of life. Cheerful and refreshed, they rise
morning, and go forth to the labours of life, chu
the carols of pious gratitude. Here is enjoy
existence; this is life indeed, with a perpetual
not attended with the tumultuous ardours of a
but the gentle, pleasant warmth of sound health.

You, therefore, who, blessed by Providence
profusion of wealth, are enabled to make *pleasure*
constant pursuit, *try the experiment*, whether *pl*
of the purest kind is not to be drawn from the
thing of piety and divine love. And surely, it
sible to retain religious principles inviolate, a
be uniformly actuated by religious sentiments.
life occasionally diversified by cheerful, and
late, and innocent amusements. Only *keep you*
with all diligence. Let your imagination be pl
your thoughts occasionally diverted; but let
heart be unseduced from the love of Him who
loved you. Let your affections still point, lil
needle to the north, wherever the vessel is blo
the winds, towards God. Your hands may b
ployed, in the avocations of social life and civi
ety: but let your heart be at leisure for the
which belong unto your peace; which will
your life constantly cheerful, and your death a
painful as the struggles of nature will admit.

Gentleness and moderation contribute to
crease as well as duration of our most refined
ments. We see nothing of extreme rigour, no
of unnatural austerity, nothing of intemperate a
in the devotion of our Saviour or his disciples
that they seem to be no less repugnant to the g
than to reason and philosophy. Nothing *ex*
passionate is durable; no, not even the *ecstasies*
tion. Violent passion is like a fire, which, when

rains. However it may rush in torrents for a day, it will exhaust itself, and dwindle to the shallow stream, scarcely creeping within the banks of its natural channel.

The passions are the chief destroyers of our peace ; the storms and tempests of the moral world. To extirpate them is impossible, if it were desirable. But to regulate them by habitual care, is not so difficult, and is certainly worth all our attention. Many men do evidently acquire a wonderful command of their passions, in the presence of their superiors, or when their temporal interest is concerned. And shall we not attempt it in the presence of God *dwelling in us*, and for an everlasting interest ?

The task is facilitated by the grace of God, which certainly co-operates with man in every virtuous endeavour. To JESUS CHRIST, then, let us have recourse. He who said to the sea, "Be still," will calm our passions as he smoothed the waves. Peace was the legacy which he left to his followers. Hear his soothing words : "Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." "The work of righteousness," says Isaiah, "is peace ; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you," says St. Peter, "through the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Not as the world giveth," says our Saviour, "give I peace." The world speaks peace, when there is no peace. Dissipation, variety of worldly business, worldly cares, worldly company, riot, noise, intemperance, produce a TUMULT, which banishes reflection, but cannot cause serenity, self-possession, and composure.

The Christian seeks *peace*, by seeking pardon of God by repentance. "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace." He seeks peace, by keeping a

watch on those great destroyers of it, his passions. On these tumultuous waves he pours the oil of Christian love, and they are calm. Thus he lives;—at peace with himself, at peace with his neighbour, and at peace with his God.

Thus he lives; and, when he quits this earthly scene, like a river whose banks are flowery, and whose waters limpid and smooth, he glides, unruffled, into the ocean of eternity. Go, then, gentle Spirit, to the realms of peace, and enjoy the peace of God!—in the bosom of thy father, and our father. Very pleasant hast thou been unto us, during the time of thy sojourning here. Dove-like were thy manners; for the Spirit, which descended like a dove, inspired thee with every amiable disposition, and above all, with the LOVE OF PEACE, national and public, as well as internal: and BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS; theirs shall be the peace of God which passeth all understanding in the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

In the kingdoms of the earth, indeed, there is seldom any lasting peace. What Christian but must drop a tear over the fertile realms of Christendom crimsoned with human blood; shed at the instigation of the spirit of the DESTROYER, taking his abode in the hearts which have rejected the HOLY GHOST, the spirit of love, the God of peace! May the rulers of the world *receive the Spirit of Christ*, and heal the wounds of the PEOPLE; so shall they experience, in the hour of their own distress, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and their crowns shall be immortal.

FINIS.

CHRISTIANITY

AN

INTERNAL AND PRACTICAL

Principle.

—●—
No. 15.
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NEW-YORK :

TO BE HAD AT THE BOOKSTORE OF MARLOW DAY,

.....
1823.

CHRISTIANITY, &c.

CHRISTIANITY bears all the marks of a divine original. It was foretold by prophecies. It was confirmed by miracles. It was ratified by the blood of its author. Its doctrines are pure, sublime, consistent. Its precepts just and holy. Its worship is spiritual. Its service reasonable, and rendered practicable by the offers of divine aid to human weakness. It is sanctioned, by the promise of eternal happiness to the faithful, and the threat of everlasting misery to the disobedient. It had no collusion with power, for power sought to crush it. It could not be in any league with the world, for it set out by declaring itself at variance with its spirit. It reprobated its maxims, it showed the vanity of its glories, the danger of its riches, the emptiness of its pleasures.

This religion does not consist in an external conformity to practices, which, though right in themselves, may be adopted from human motives and to answer secular purposes. It is not a religion of forms, and modes, and decencies. It is being transformed into the image of God. It is being like-minded with Christ. It is considering him as our sanctifier, as well as our redeemer. It is endeavouring to live to him here, that we may live with him hereafter. It is desiring earnestly to surrender our will to his, our heart to the conduct of his spirit, our life to the guidance of his precepts.

The sacred writings frequently point out like

same spirit which in the creation of the world moved upon the face of the waters, operates upon the human character to produce a new heart and a new life. By this operation, when submitted to, the affections and faculties of the man receive a new impulse—his dark understanding is illuminated; his rebellious will is subdued; his irregular desires are rectified; his judgment is informed; his inclinations are sanctified; his hopes and fears are directed to their true and proper end. Heaven becomes the object of his hopes, and eternal separation from God the object of his fears. The love of the world, is changed into the love of God. The whole internal frame and constitution receive a nobler bent; the intents and purposes of the mind, a sublimer aim. The heart, no longer the worshipper of the world, is struggling to become its conqueror. Our blessed Redeemer, in overcoming the world, *bequeathed us his command to overcome it also*: but as he did not give the command without the example, so he did not give the example without the offer of a power to obey the command.

Genuine religion demands not merely an external profession of our allegiance to God, but an inward devotedness of ourselves to his service. It raises the Christian above the world, while he lives in it. It opens his eyes to realities, in the place of those shadows which he has been pursuing. Any religion which has not this for its end and object, is not that religion which the New Testament has presented to us; which our Redeemer came down on earth to teach us by his precepts, to illustrate by his example, and confirm by his death.

The religion which it is our present object to recommend, is the *religion of the heart*. There it subsists as the fountain of spiritual life; thence it

sends forth, as from the central seat of its existence, supplies of life and warmth through the whole frame: there is the soul of virtue; there is the vital principle which animates the whole being of a Christian.

Those who disbelieve that any such principle exists, will, it is to be feared, effectually prevent it existing in themselves; at least, while they make their own state the measure of their general judgment. Not being sensible of the required dispositions, in their own hearts, they establish this as a proof of its impossibility in all cases.

When our own heart and experience do not illustrate these truths practically, so as to afford some evidence of their reality, let us examine our own minds, and faithfully follow up our convictions; let us inquire whether God has really been wanting in the accomplishment of his promises; or whether we have not been deficient in yielding to the suggestions of conscience, the motions of his Spirit? Whether we have not neglected to implore the aids of that Spirit; whether we have not in various instances resisted them? Let us ask ourselves—Have we looked up to our Heavenly Father, with humble dependence, for the supplies of his grace? or, having prayed for those blessings only as a form, and having acquitted ourselves of the form, do we continue to live as if we had not so prayed? Having implored his direction, do we endeavour to submit ourselves to his guidance? Having prayed that his will may be done, do we never set up our will in contradiction to his?

If, then, we receive not the promised support and comfort, the failure must rest somewhere. It lies between him who has promised, and him to whom the promise is made. There is no other alternative;—would it not be blasphemy to transfer the failure to God? Let us not, then, rest, till we have

cleared up the difficulty, by discovering the cause, why, after a continued round of reading and prayer, after having for years conformed to outward duties, we find ourselves just where we were at setting out.

We complain of our own weakness, and plead our inability as a reason, why we cannot serve God as we ought. This infirmity, its nature and its measure, God knows far more exactly than we know it; yet he knows, that with the help which he offers us, we can both love and obey him, or he never would have made it the qualification of obtaining his favour—he never would have said, “Give me thy heart”—“Seek ye my face”—“Add to your faith virtue”—“Have a right heart and a right spirit”—“Strengthen the things that remain”—“Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.”

It is the divine agency which sanctifies all means, and renders all external revelation effectual. The doctrines of salvation contained in the Scriptures, require the influence of that spirit which dictated them, to produce an influential faith. This Spirit, by enlightening the mind, brings an inward conviction of divine truth into operation. A mere historical faith, the mere evidence of facts, which a man may obtain from reading, though it may enable him to refute the objections of others, will not operate against his corrupt affections; will not conquer his rebellious will; and therefore is not an efficacious principle.

That the influence or agency of the Divine Spirit on the mind, is not an imaginary thing, is confirmed by the whole tenour of Scripture. If it were not so, should we have such repeated cautions against neglecting or opposing it? If the Holy Spirit could not be “grieved,” might not be “quenched,” were not likely to be “resisted;” that very Spirit which

proclaimed the prohibitions, would never have said, "grieve not," "quench not," "resist not." The Bible never warns us against imaginary evil, nor courts us to imaginary good. If then we refuse to submit to its gentle persuasions, for such they are, and not arbitrary compulsions, we have no right to expect to attain that peace and liberty which are the privilege, the promised reward of sincere Christians.

The happiness of a Christian does not consist in mere feelings, or frames which are only occasional, but in a settled, calm conviction that God and eternal things have the prevailing influence in his heart. The true measure to be taken of our state is from a perceptible change in our desires, tastes, and pleasures; from a sense of progress in holiness of heart and life. If God graciously vouchsafe us inward consolation, it is to animate us to further progress; it is given us for support in our way, and not for a settled maintenance in our present condition. If the promises are our food, the commandments are our work; and a temperate Christian ought to desire nourishment only to carry him through his business. Besides these occasional supports, which we are more ready to desire than to put ourselves in the way to obtain, there is an inward peace in an humble trust in God, and in a simple reliance on his Providence; there is a repose of spirit, a freedom from solicitude in a lowly confidence in him, for which the world has nothing to give in exchange.

The state we have been describing, is that sober earnest of heaven, that reasonable anticipation of eternal felicity, which God is graciously pleased to grant, not partially, not arbitrarily, but to *all* who diligently seek his face, to all to whom his service is freedom, his will a law, his spirit a guide; to all who love him unfeignedly, to all who devote them-

elves to him unreservedly, to all who with deep self-abasement, yet with filial confidence, prostrate themselves before him, saying, Lord, lift thou up the ight of thy countenance upon us and we shall be safe.

But no man ought to flatter himself that he is in the favour of God, whose life is not consecrated to the service of God. The finest theory never yet carried any man to Heaven. A religion of notions which occupies the mind, without improving the heart, may obstruct, but cannot advance the salvation of men. Such a religion is not that which Christ came to teach mankind.

Religion is more than mere correctness of thought, justness of conception, and exactness of judgment. It is a lifegiving principle. It must be infused into habit, as well as govern in the understanding; it must regulate the will, as well as direct the creed. It must not only cast the opinions into a new frame, but the heart into a new mould. It is a transforming as well as penetrating principle. It changes the tastes, gives activity to the inclinations, and, together with a new heart, produces a new life.

Christianity enjoins the same temper, the same spirit, the same dispositions on all its real professors. The act, the performance, must depend on circumstances. The power of doing good, or being extensively useful, is withheld from many, from whom, however, the reward will not be withheld. If the outward act constituted the whole value of Christian virtue, then must the author of all good be himself the author of injustice, by putting it out of the power of multitudes to fulfil some of his own commands. In principles, in tempers, in fervent desires, in holy endeavours, consists the very essence of Christian duty.

powerful spring will actuate our movements. The essence of religion does not so much consist in actions as affections. Right actions performed where there are no right affections, are utterly destitute of the substance of virtue. But neither can affections substantially and truly subsist without producing right actions. For never let it be forgotten, that a pious inclination which has not life and vigour is inefficient to ripen into act when the occasion presents itself, and a right action which does not grow out of a pure motive, will neither of them have any place in the account of real goodness. A good inclination will be contrary to sin, but a mere inclination will not subdue sin.

The love of God, as it is the source of every action and feeling, so it is the only principle which necessarily involves the love of our fellow-creatures. Without this we do not love man as we ought. There is a love of partiality, but not of benevolence to friends and favourites, of parties and societies, but not of man collectively. It is true, we may assist without this principle, relieve his distresses, but we do not bear with his faults. We may promote

sional good acts are no criterion of the state of the heart ; for who is there, who does not sometimes do them ? If the principle be that of sound Christianity, it will never be indolent. While we shall never do good with any great effect, till we labour to be conformed, in ~~some~~ some measure, to the image of God ; we shall best evince our having obtained something of that conformity, by a course of steady and active obedience to God.

Every individual should bear in mind, that he is sent into the world to act a part in it. And though one may have a more splendid, and another a more obscure part assigned him, yet the actor of each is equally, is awfully accountable. Though God is not hard, he is an exact master. His service, though not a severe, is a reasonable service. He exactly proportions his demands to his gifts. If he does not expect that one talent should be as productive as five, yet to even a single talent a proportionable responsibility is annexed.

He who has said, "give me thy heart," will not be satisfied with less ; he will not accept the praying lips, nor the mere hand of charity as substitutes.

A real Christian will be just, sober, and charitable ; but he will not rest for salvation on justice, sobriety, or charity. He will perform the duties they enjoin, in the spirit of Christianity, as instances of devout obedience, as evidences of a heart devoted to God.

All virtues, it cannot be too often repeated, are accepted or rejected according to the principle which dictates them. This principle, kept in due exercise, becomes a habit, and every act strengthens the inclination, adding vigour to the principle, and pleasure to the performance.

We cannot be said to be real Christians, till religion becomes our animating motive, our prevailing

principle and pursuit, as much as worldly thing the prevailing motive, principle, and pursuit of ly men.

A real Christian being deeply sensible of the worthlessness of any actions, which do not flow from the right fountain, will aim at such an his conformity to the divine will, that to perform a of justice, charity, kindness, temperance, and kindred virtue, may become the temper, the habit, the abiding state of his heart; that like natural streams, they may flow voluntarily from the source.

Practical Christianity then, is the actual operation of Christian principles. It is lying on the various occasions to exemplify them. It is "exercising ourselves unto Godliness." A real Christian will keep his heart open, his mind prepared, his affections alive to do whatever may occur in the way of doing good is his vocation. He rejects nothing which comes within the sphere of his calling; he is satisfied with the work he is employed in, might be doing a better. His having acquitted himself of a good action, is so far from furnishing with an excuse for avoiding the next, that it is reason for his embarking in it. His charity is scarcely limited by his power; his will knows no limits. His ability may have bounds,—his benevolence has none. He is in mind and desire the benefactor of every miserable man. Where the heart is large, however small the ability, many ways of good will be invented. Christian charity is an enlarger of means. Christian self-denial, if it cannot fill the purse; will not empty it by a vanity. It provides for others by abridging from itself. It subdues the passions it will lop, vanities it will cut off. The miser of liberal things will find means of effecting

them, which to the indolent appear incredible, to the covetous impossible. Christian beneficence takes a large sweep. Money may fail, but benevolence will be going on. If the Christian cannot relieve wants he may mitigate sorrow. If he cannot give money, he may exercise a more difficult virtue—he may forgive injuries. If great occasions do not arise, he will thankfully seize on small ones. He will never be at a loss for employment, while there is a misery within his knowledge. He will never be idle, while there is a distress to be relieved in another, or a corruption to be cured in his own heart. We have employment assigned us for every circumstance in life. When we are alone we have our thoughts to watch; in the family, our tempers; in company, our tongues.

What an example of disinterested goodness and unbounded kindness, have we in our heavenly Father! who is merciful over all his works; who distributes common blessings without distinction; who bestows the necessary refreshments of life, the shining sun, and the refreshing shower, without waiting, as we are apt to do, for personal merit, or attachment, or gratitude, as a qualification for his favours; who does not afflict willingly; who delights in the happiness, and desires the salvation, of all the children of men.

What a model for our humble imitation, is our blessed Saviour! whose whole life was one unbroken series of universal charity; who, after teaching the multitude, fed them; who repulsed none for being ignorant; who was impatient with none for being dull; who despised none for being contemned by the world; who encouraged those whose importunity others censured; who gave bread, and forgave injuries: setting us an example, (says the Apostle,) that we should follow his steps.

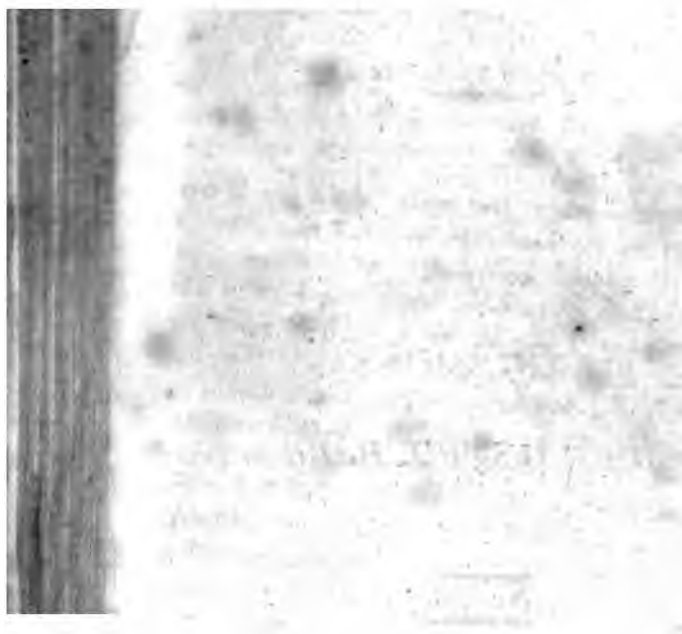
the generality of decorous people affirm (how we know not) to be safe for them ; yet if we find these things stir up in us improper propensities they awaken thoughts which ought not to be ; if they make spiritual concerns appear dull, wind our heart a little more about the world ; short, if we find them injurious to our own souls let no example or persuasion, no belief of their alleged innocence, no plea of their perfect safety induce us to indulge in them. It matters little to our propriety, what they are to others. Our business is with ourselves. Our responsibility is on our own shoulders. Others cannot know the side on which we are able. Let our own unbiassed judgment determine our opinion ; let our own experience decide our own conduct.

FINIS.

THOUGHTS
ON THE
Right Employment of Time,
SELECTED FROM THE
WRITINGS
OF THE
EMINENT AND PIOUS
CHIEF JUSTICE HALE.

No. 16.

NEW-YORK:
TO BE HAD AT THE BOOKSTORE OF MANLON DAY,
.....
1823.



In the Right Employment of Time.



time is part of that talent, which my Maker put into my hand, and for which he will at the day demand an account; and if I have spent talent in unprofitable employments, or in less able than I should, my arrear is so much the more. If I have consumed my time, in studying preferment, honour, or wealth, in this world; in learning how to please myself with vain and unnecessary recreations; in unlawful or excessive pleasures; in awful or immoderate curiosities; which I might have spent in the study of the mystery of Christ, in conformity unto that will and testament he left for improving my interest in him, I have lost my time, and opportunity; for which I am accountable, as mispent.*

The consideration of our latter end, is a great commandment means to put us upon the best and most able improvement of our time. There are cer-

of the Knowledge of Christ crucified." Contemplations, p. 46.

lations, and dependences, without covetousness
anxiety ; the diligent and faithful walking in our
ings, and discharge thereof. But there are
other businesses of greater importance, which y
attainable without injuring ourselves in those
mon concerns of our lives : namely, our know
of God, of his will, and of the doctrine of o
demption by Christ ; our repentance of sins
making and keeping our peace with God ; acqu
ing ourselves with him ; living to his glory ; wa
as in his presence ; praying to him ; learning t
pend upon him ; rejoicing in him ; walking the
unto him.—These, and such like as these, ar
great business and end of our lives, for which v
joy them in this world ; and these fit and prep
for that which is to come. And the consider
that our lives are short and uncertain, and that
will sooner or later come, puts us upon this re
tion and practice to do this our great work w

Yea, and without any neglect of what is necessary to be done in order to the common necessities of our lives and callings. It is not these that disable us and rob us of our time ; but the thieves that rob us of our time, and our one thing necessary, are negligence, excess of pleasure, immoderate cares for wealth, honour, and grandeur ; excessive eating and drinking, curiosity, idleness : and then, when sickness comes, and death comes, and God Almighty calls upon us to give up the account of our stewardship, we are all in confusion, our business is not half done ; it may be, not begun ; and yet our lamp is out ; our day is spent ; night hath overtaken us ; and what we do is with much trouble, perplexity, and vexation ; and possibly our soul takes its flight before we can finish it.*

Most certainly, the wise consideration of our latter end, and the employing of ourselves, on that account upon that one thing necessary, render the life [so spent] the most contenting and comfortable life in the world. For, as a man that is aforehand in the world, hath a much more quiet life in order to externals, than he that is behindhand ; so a man that hath made his peace with his Maker through Christ Jesus, hath done a great part of the chief business of his life, and is ready, upon all occasions, for all conditions, whereunto the Divine Providence shall assign him, whether of life or death, of health or sickness, of poverty or riches ; he is as it were afore-

* "Of the consideration of our latter end." *Ibid.* p. A.

hand, in the business and concern of his everlasting, and of his present state also. If God lend him longer life in this world, he carries on his great business to greater degrees of perfection, with ease, and without difficulty, trouble, or perturbation. But if Almighty God cut him shorter, and call him to give an account of his stewardship, he is ready ; his accounts are fair, and his business is not now to be gone about. Blessed is that servant, whom his master, when he cometh, shall find so doing.*

Although death be thus subdued, and rendered rather a benefit than a terror, to good men ; yet, death is not to be wished or desired ; though it be an object not to be feared, it is a thing not to be coveted ; for certainly life is the greatest temporal blessing in this world. It was the passion, not the virtue, of that excellent prophet Elijah, that desired to die, because he thought himself only left of the true worshippers of God, 1 *Kings*, xix. 4. 10. We are all placed in this world by Almighty God, and a talent of life is delivered to us, and we are commanded to improve it ; a task is set every one of us, in this life, by the Great Master of the Family of Heaven and Earth ; and we are required with patience, obedience, and faithfulness, to perform our task, and not to be weary of our work, nor wish our day at an end before its time. When our Lord calls us, it is our duty with courage and cheerfulness to obey his call : but, until he calls, it is our duty, with patience, and contented-

ness, to perform our task ; to improve our knowledge and faith ; to do those works of piety and goodness that he requires ; to serve our generation ; to give an example of virtue and goodness ; to encourage others in the ways of virtue and goodness ; to provide for our families and relations ; to do all good offices of justice, righteousness, liberality, and charity, to others ; cheerfully and industriously to follow our callings and other natural, civil, and moral employments ; which, though of a lower importance in respect of ourselves, are of greater use and moment in respect of others ; and are required of us, as part of the task that our great Lord enjoins, and for the sake of which he also bestows many talents upon us, to be thus improved in this life, and for which we must, at the end of our day, give our Lord an account : and, therefore, for the sake of this also, we are to be thankful for our life ; and not be desirous to leave our post, our station, our business, our life, till our Lord calls us to himself in the ordinary way of his providence ; for he is the only Lord of our lives, and we are not the Lords of our own lives.*

And again, as the business, and employments, and concerns of our life, must not estrange us from the thoughts of death ; so we must be careful, that the overmuch thought of death do not so much possess our thoughts as to make us forget the concerns of our life, or neglect the business for which that portion of time is allowed us : As, the business of fitting

our souls for heaven ; the business of our callings, relations, places, stations : nay, the comfortable, thankful, sober enjoyments of those honest, lawful comforts of our life that God lends us ; so as it be done with great sobriety, and moderation, as in the presence of God, and with much thankfulness to him ; for this is part of that very duty we owe to God for those very external comforts and blessings we enjoy. *Deut.* xxviii. 47. A wise and due consideration of our latter end, is neither to render us a sad, melancholy, disconsolate people, nor to render us unfit for the businesses and offices of our life ; but to render us more watchful, vigilant, industrious, soberly cheerful, and thankful to that God, that hath been pleased thus to make our lives serviceable to Him, comfortable to us, profitable to others, and, after all this, to take away the bitterness and sting of death through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Whatever you do, (says the author in another place,) be very careful to retain in your heart a habit of religion, that may be always about you ; and keep your heart and your life always as in the presence of God, and tending towards him. This will be continually with you, and put itself into acts, even although you are not in a solemn posture of religious worship. This will lend you multitudes of religious applications to Almighty God, upon all occasions and interventions ; which will not at all hinder you, in any measure, in your secular occasions, but better

and further you. This will confer a tincture of devotion upon all your secular employments, and turn those very actions, which are civil or natural, into the very true nature of religion, and make your whole life to be an unintermitted life of religion and duty to God. For this habit of piety in your soul, will not only not lie sleeping and inactive, but almost in every hour of the day, will put forth actual exertings of itself in applications of short occasional prayers, thanksgivings, dependence, and resort unto that God that is always near you, and that lodgeth in a manner in your heart, by his fear and love, and by habitual religion towards him. And, by this means, you do, effectually, and in the best and readiest manner imaginable, doubly redeem your time. 1. In the lawful exercise of those natural and civil concerns, which are not only permitted, but in a great measure enjoined by Almighty God. 2. At the same time exercising acts of religious duties, observance, and veneration unto Almighty God, by perpetuated, or at least frequently reiterated, though short, acts of devotion to him. And this is the great art of Christian chemistry, to convert those acts that are natural or civil, into acts truly religious; whereby the whole course of this life is both truly and interpretatively a service to Almighty God, and an uninterrupted state of religion: which is the best, and noblest, and most universal redemption of time.*

Be very careful to prefer those actions of your life

* "Of the Redemption of Time." *Contemplations*, &c. p. 259.

that most concern you ; be sure to do them chiefest, to do them most. Let those things that are of less moment, give place to those things that are of greatest moment. Every man of the most ordinary prudence, having many things to do, will be sure to be doing that first and chiefest, which most concerns him, and which, being omitted, and possibly wholly disappointed, might occasion his most irreparable loss. We have, it is true, many things to be done in this life, *Ars longa, vita brevis* ;† and we have seasons and opportunities for them ; but of these many things, some are barely conveniences for this life ; some, though they seem more necessary, yet still they rise no higher, nor look further, nor serve longer, than for the meridian of this life ; and are of no possible use, the next moment after death. The pleasures, the profits, the honours, the most florid accommodations of great human learning, stately houses and palaces, goodly possessions, the greatest honours, highest reputation, deepest policy—they are fitted only to this life ; when death comes, they are insignificant, pitiful things, and serve for nothing at all the very next moment after death ; nay, the diseases and pains, and languishings that are the preludes of death, render them perfectly vain, if not vexatious and torturing. But there are certain businesses that are not only excellently useful in this life, but such as abide by us in sickness, in death ; nay, go along with us with singular comfort into the next life, and never

leave us, but state us in eternal rest and happiness, such as may be with much ease acquired in the times of health and life, but very difficult to be attained in the time of sickness, and the hour of death, but never to be forgotten after death, such as are of that necessity, that, in comparison of them, all other things are impertinent and vain, if not desperately noxious and hurtful. There is no necessity for me to be rich and great in the world ; to have such a title of honour, such a place of dignity, or profit ; to leave such an inheritance or titular dignity to my son ; or to have so many thousand pounds in my inventory, when I die. But there are certain matters of absolute necessity to me, such as if I am without, I am undone and lost, and yet such as if not attained here in this life, can never be attained ; and therefore, as it concerns me in the highest degree to attain them, so it concerns me in the highest degree to attain them in this life, and to take all opportunities imaginable in order thereunto, and to redeem every minute of time for that purpose, lest I should be for ever disappointed ; and not to be like the foolish virgin, getting oil when the door is ready to be shut ; but be fitted and ready to die, and give up my account to my Lord with peace, and cheerfulness, and comfort ; so that if I should, either by the hand of some disease or casualty, or other providence, receive this solemn message, ‘ Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die,’ I might receive it with as much readiness, willingness, and cheerfulness, as a faithful and diligent servant would receive this command from his master : ‘ You

must take such a journey for me to-morrow.' Sickness and pain, and wearisome and froward old age, have business enough of themselves to entertain us; and any man that hath had experience of either, will find he hath enough to do to bear them, or to struggle with them. And further, we know not whether the grace and opportunity that God hath lent us, and we have neglected in our lives, shall ever be afforded again to us in the times of our sicknesses, or upon our deathbeds; but a little portion of time in our lives and healths are furnished with thousands of invitations and golden opportunities for these great works. Let us therefore redeem those portions of time that our life and health lend us, for this great and one thing necessary: and let us remember, that when we shall come to die, and our souls sit as it were hovering upon our lips, ready to take their flight, at how great a rate we would then be willing to purchase some of those hours we once trifled away!*

Upon the management and disposal of our time depends the everlasting concernment of our souls. *Ex hoc momento pendet Æternitas* †. Time once lost, is lost for ever. It is never to be recovered; all the wealth of both the Indies will not redeem nor recall the last hour I spent; it ceaseth for ever.‡

* *Ibid* p. 261—264, 267.

† On this small portion of time eternity depends.

‡ *Ibid*. p. 266.

BRIEF HINTS
TO
P A R E N T S,
ON THE
SUBJECT
OF
EDUCATION.

No. 17.

NEW-YORK:

TO BE HAD AT THE BOOKSTORE OF MAHLON DAY,
No. 372 Pearl-street.

1823.



BRIEF HINTS TO PARENTS, &c.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

SUCCESS in education depends more on prevention, than cure—more on forming habits, than laying injunctions—more on example, than precept. It is important, however, that rules laid down should be strictly enforced, till obedience becomes habitual.

But when is this interesting business to be begun, and how pursued?

“It is to be begun from the cradle. The first step is to teach the infantile subject implicit obedience to parental authority; and then to rule with such moderation and sweetness, that it shall entirely trust and love the hand that guides it. In this way, the good impressions made upon the young mind, are likely to be indelible.”* Persevering, yet gentle firmness, begun in infancy, establishes proper discipline, procures obedience, and prevents almost all punishment.

The subjection of a child's will may be effected before its understanding is sufficiently enlarged to be influenced by reasoning. Generally the first inclination a child discovers, is will. The first business of a parent, therefore, is to subject it. An infant will reach out its hand to take something improper for it to have; if its hand be then withheld, and the countenance and expression of the parent refuse the indulgence, unmoved by its cries or struggles, it will soon learn to yield. And by uniformly experiencing

* This passage, and those similarly marked in the following pages, are from “*The Brief Remarker on the Ways of Man*,” a work fraught with much useful matter on a variety of subjects.

denial, equally firm, whatever its wishes ought not to be granted, submission will become familiar and easy.

But prudent parents, while they are careful to subdue self-will in their child, will be equally careful to cherish in it every appearance of benevolence and affection.

As children advance in age, and the faculties of the mind expand, parents, by an easy, familiar mode of conversing with them, and adapting their language to their age and capacity, may acquire almost unbounded influence over them. If parents were thus careful to cultivate the young mind from the first dawn of reason, watching every opportunity of communicating instruction, at the same time seeking the Divine blessing on their humble endeavours, we may safely believe they would be rarely disappointed in having their children grow up around them, all that they could reasonably desire them to be.

It is by enlightening the understanding, that children are brought to feel the true ground of parental authority. Injunctions and restraints, if softened by endearment, will generally find returns of obedience; and ungrateful claims to liberty, will rarely oppose parental advice bestowed with meekness. Early to impress the tender mind with clearly defined perceptions of right and wrong, is very important. Much misery may be prevented by it.

FREEDOM BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

According to the wise provision of Providence the fond endearment of parental love, produces an attachment in the breast of the child. A judicious

fidence has been early invited by endearing affability, and established by prudence, reserve in the child will seldom have place in maturer years.

When children are accustomed freely to unbosom themselves, and unreservedly to reveal their wishes to the parental friend, who is most interested in their welfare, what advantages must result to them, and what pleasure to the mind of an affectionate parent ! When parents thus become to their children, the familiar friends, the unreserved confidants, the sympathising partners in their joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments ; a hold on the mind is obtained which will continue when authority ceases ; and will prove a safeguard through the most critical periods of life.

Young people who are treated as companions by judicious parents, are seldom addicted to degrading practices. They will even forego many indulgences to avoid displeasing them, or giving them pain :

And there are few young people who would not gladly avail themselves of parental advice and experience, if not discouraged by want of freedom in the parent. Therefore, if we would have children unbosom their thoughts to us, their confidence must be invited by kindness and condescension. Not a condescension to improper indulgences, but a condescension that increases parental authority in right government.—There is no fear of losing respect or right authority, by freedom and familiarity : It is by that we gain their confidence, and thus learn to know, and to correct their faults.

Pure affection is so directed to the happiness of the child, that while it endeavours, by kindness and love, to prevent any thing like forced obedience, it also guards against that kind of liberty by which it loses its authority

RESERVEDNESS AND SEVERITY.

That respect to a parent, which is obtained by uniting gentleness with firmness, differs widely from the slavish fear produced by severe treatment. For where the dread of punishment predominates, the disposition is generally artful. Fear, which is the effect of severity, prompts children, not so much to avoid faults, as to elude detection.

Indeed timid children can hardly resist the temptation which terror holds out to them, of endeavouring to hide offences if possible. And though severity should extort confession, and promise of strict obedience, it is not calculated to produce sincere repentance, or awaken virtuous thoughts; nor does it implant any principle to hinder the child from committing a similar fault in our absence. Its self-will may indeed be made sullenly to submit to superior strength, but it will remain unsubjected. And the odious spirit of revenge, by this kind of treatment, is often generated.

One among the many disadvantages attending severe measures, is, that parents generally trust to the effects of chastisement, and are deficient in that uniform superintendence, advice and caution, on which the forming right habits, almost entirely depends. Children, when subjected to severity, often obtain more indulgences, and take more dangerous liberties, than those who are moderately curbed and gently instructed. The keen temper that transports the parent to blows and harsh treatment, is often accompanied by strong affections; and when anger has subsided, he is sorry for having gone so far; then too much liberty succeeds, till another fault, originating in parental indulgence or negligence, draws on the child another unprofitable punishment. And thus

anger, sullenness, or obstinate perverseness : unless severity has broken the spirits, and the child sinks under discouragement. And, as the frequent recurrence of anger and resentment, tends to beget hatred and ill-will, the disposition to benevolence is destroyed, and malevolence is introduced in its room.

“Many children possess quick feelings of honour and disgrace : and in children the most promising, these feelings are often the most acute. They have a keen sensibility to shame, whereof a good use may be made by prudent management ; but if this sensibility be put to hard proof, and that frequently, it becomes blunted, and their minds grow callous. And a child that is lost to shame, is in peculiar danger of being a lost child.”

Again : “Many parents of good sense, and great moral worth, fearful of failing in their duty by not governing enough, run into the opposite extreme. They maintain such reservedness, distance, and stateliness toward their children, that they hardly dare to speak in their presence. They incumber them with a multitude of regulations ; they tire them with long lessons of stern monitions ; they disgust and alienate them with a superabundance of sharp reproof ; they treat their little levities as if they were heinous crimes. Instead of drawing them with ‘cords of love,’ they bind them fast with cords that are galling and painful.”*

Again, there are some parents whose manner towards their children varies in exact proportion to the variations of their own fickle tempers. When in a pleasant humour themselves, they indulge them in every thing : when displeased or angry, they will punish for almost nothing. This sort of government, if government it may be called, tends alike to discourage, and to produce contempt.

Children that are trained up under severe disci-

pline, however much they fear their parents, do rarely love them much; and they must needs possess more than a common share of native amiableness, if, in the end, they turn out sweet tempered, humane, and of nice sense of honour.

To show children that we are deeply afflicted, not enraged at their misconduct, tends more to awaken their feelings, bring into action their reason, and reclaim them from evil, than the severity of the rod, which irritates the disposition, but rarely convinces the judgment.

IMPROPER INDULGENCE.

Gratification of will, is encouraged in children by frequent indulgence of their improper desires; with which every notion of happiness becomes thus connected; and the idea of misery with that of disappointment. Thus, an over-regard for personal ease, and personal gratification, is implanted in the mind, and selfishness and pride too frequently become the most prominent features in the character; for, by improper indulgence, self-will is so fostered, that a capricious humour is its unavoidable consequence. The passions so act and react upon each other, that the frequent gratification of will engenders pride, and pride augments the desire of gratifying the will, till it becomes insatiable. Many are the tyrannical husbands and fathers, and turbulent wives and mothers, that have been formed by an education in which the will has never known subjection. For, as too great indulgence increases selfishness; so does the spirit of selfishness occasion miseries in domestic life.

RULES AND INJUNCTIONS.

“A few rules are necessary for the government of children, and but a few. These should be too plain

to be misunderstood, too reasonable to admit of dispute, and too important to be violated or neglected. They should be engraven early upon the memories of children, and enforced, when need requires it, with steady, but mild firmness. And by and by they will grow into habits; and submission and obedience will become natural" and easy.

"When children are managed in this manner from infancy, by parents, whose example comports with their injunctions, and whose exercise of authority carries along with it evident marks of tender affection, they feel the yoke to be easy, and are withheld from acts of disobedience, more by filial love, than the dread of chastisement. Hence it is, that, in some houses, family government goes on with singular regularity, though so silent as to be scarcely perceived. There is no violent scolding; no boisterous threats; no fierce looks. Both the father and the mother are so mild and even in temper and good behaviour, that they seem scarcely to display any authority at all; and yet their children are orderly, submissive, and dutiful, in a very uncommon degree. A single word, or a mere glance of the eye, from either the one or the other, they mind more than the children of some families do pelting and hard blows."

"Thus mildly treated, children are led to delight in the company and conversation of their parents, and to receive counsel readily from their lips: and when they come of age to act for themselves, they do not feel like emancipated slaves; but are still looking back, with mixed emotions of respect and love, to the salutary discipline they had been under, still accustoming themselves to consult their parents and to receive their advice with deference;"* being thus prepared to maintain similar discipline in their own families.

AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE.

It is essential for children to know how to obey, and to bear a denial. But if we are not exact and regular in requiring obedience, we shall never obtain it. This requires steadiness and self-command; and without these, there is very little hope, that the education of a child will be conducted upon right principles. Authority to effect the desired purpose, must be unshaken, administered with affection, and free from fretfulness or ill temper; and though regular and consistent, never unnecessarily called into action, but always with effect. Authority thus guarded will seldom fail to procure a ready obedience, free from the thralldom of that slavish fear begot by sternness and severity.

A vigilant superintendence of children is necessary, but not a frequent interference, if it can be avoided. To preserve them from evil, not from childishness, should be our object.

Children are children, and it is our duty to sympathise with them, as such; to impose upon them no unnecessary restraints; to grant every harmless gratification, and, as far as possible, to promote their enjoyment. This is by no means incompatible with salutary discipline; which, if it ever obtain right obedience, must be begun and maintained by sympathy and kindness.

What is vulgarly called scolding, has no part in establishing authority; but tends greatly to weaken it. A multiplicity of words by way of rebukes and threats, accomplishes very little in obtaining influence or obedience.

PUNISHMENTS.

Corporal punishment should be the last resort; never used except for an atrocious crime, or a

smaller one obstinately persisted in. And, to render it efficacious, or rather, to prevent its becoming a dangerous evil, it should be administered with perfect serenity of temper, and affection towards the offender.

Every kind of punishment that may terrify the imagination, ought to be strictly guarded against. The dark closet is one of that kind. Severe reproaches, rough handling, and the hasty slap, if they do not much terrify, lessen right authority and injure the temper of a child.

Children should not be punished for mere accidents; but mildly warned against similar carelessness in future. And yet some people show much greater displeasure with a child for accidentally breaking a piece of china, or tearing its clothes, than for telling an untruth. Here the lesser is preferred to the greater, and the primary object of education is lost sight of.

When a child has been punished in any way, he should be restored to favour as soon as possible: And when he has received forgiveness, treated as if nothing had happened. He may be affectionately reminded of his fault in private, as a warning for the future; but to upbraid him with it, especially in the presence of others, is a breach of honour, and a great unkindness. Under any circumstance, to reproach children in company, is useless, and often injurious, as well as painful to them; and is generally done from irritability of temper, with little view to their profit. To have the name of a naughty child, may produce so disheartening an effect on the mind, that the ill consequences may be felt to its great disadvantage.

HARMONY IN FAMILIES.

Impartiality tends greatly to promote harmony in families. Hence the necessity of parents not

manifesting any partiality to one or more of their children. In the favoured child, it lays the foundation for pride and self-importance, and in the neglected one, it raises indignation if not hatred; whatever may be the motives assigned for partiality, parents must answer to the Judge of all the earth, for the sorrows and evils it produces.

Harmony in a family will be greatly interrupted, should the father and mother pursue different systems in the management of their children. It is therefore highly necessary that they adopt a similar plan; otherwise one or the other of them, and perhaps both, will lose the esteem of their children; obedience to either is not to be expected, or the probability is, that bad habits, and incorrect principles will be established.

In order to promote love and harmony among children, one should not be allowed to domineer over or tease another. Nor ought one to be praised at the expense of another. No envious comparisons must be drawn. Children should not be allowed to scoff at one who happens to be an offender. This practice destroys affection, and gives rise to resentment and retaliation. They should be taught to feel for one another when in disgrace, and not be prohibited from interceding.

TEMPER.

Great care is necessary not to injure the temper of children; which is easily done. The government of our own temper is essential. For, if we speak to a child in a fretful manner, we shall generally find, that his answer partakes of the like character. Our own irritability often excites a similar disposition in the little ones around us.

Blame is to be dispensed cautiously. For a child may be called naughty, troublesome, or unkind,

till either his temper will be kept in continual irritation, or he will listen with perfect indifference.

In early childhood, much may be done by a system of prevention. A judicious parent may avert many an impending naughty fit by change of object, gentle amusement, and care to put no temptation in the way, if any of the little ones appear to be uncomfortable or irritable.

Children should not be unnecessarily thwarted when in pursuit of an object. A child, for example, before he can speak, is trotting after a ball ; the nurse snatches him up at the moment, to be washed, and the poor child throws himself into a violent passion ; whereas, had she kindly assisted him in gaining his object and then taken him up, this trial would have been spared, and his temper been uninjured.—Teasing and derision tend very much to imbitter the best temper.

GENEROSITY AND BENEVOLENCE.

To promote these virtues, selfishness, the prevailing evil of the human heart, must be carefully watched, and perseveringly counteracted in our children, and in our own conduct on all occasions.

Generosity and benevolence, are not of a nature to be enforced by authority. But we may do much to promote their growth by our example, our influence, our instruction, and by the judicious improvement of those natural feelings of kindness, which almost all children occasionally display. There are very few, if any, who do not discover emotions of sympathy and pity, at the sight of sorrow and suffering ; these are among the favourable opportunities for awakening their benevolence and compassion ; not only toward their fellow-creatures, but to every living thing. And we should be particularly careful to lose no such opportunity of cultivating this tenderness of feeling among themselves.

When a child has received an act of kindness or generosity, an appeal ought instantly to be made to his feelings, and the duty of contributing in a similar manner to the happiness of others, enforced at the moment when the mind is in a proper tone for the exercise of the sympathetic feelings.

In order to promote sympathetic feelings in children, parents should uniformly manifest an abhorrence of cruelty, under whatever form it may appear; even when exercised toward the most insignificant insect. They should also watchfully guard against, and endeavour to suppress, a revengeful disposition, not only in their children, but also in those around them. For if a child frequently hears the language of retaliation and mutual reproach, can we be surprised if he displays an irascible and vindictive temper, as his will and his passions are strengthened by age?

The principle of responsibility for the right use both of time and property, should be frequently impressed on the youthful mind. Teach them that a lavish use of the gifts of our Heavenly Father, is a species of ingratitude to him, and injustice to those of our fellow-creatures who need the blessings so bountifully bestowed upon us. Teach them not to waste the least property, nor spoil the most trifling article, as both may be useful to poor people. To give the feelings of commiseration and benevolence a right direction, they should be exercised in good deeds. They may be taught to take care of, and save their clothing when past their use, to give to those poor children who have not sufficient clothes to defend them from the cold. Parents' example in thus saving, and giving, is powerful in calling into action those amiable virtues in their children!

JUSTICE.

An early and deep rooted sense of justice, strict justice, is the proper soil wherein to nourish every

moral virtue ; and therefore it should be the constant care of parents, assiduously to instil its importance into the tender minds of their children. The feelings of benevolence will never be uniform nor extensive in their operations, unless they are supported by a strong sense of justice. The most scrupulous integrity, liberality, fair dealing, and honour, consistent with doing unto others on all occasions, as they would be done unto, ought to be early and forcibly inculcated, by example as well as precept. So far from indulging a smile at any instance of selfish dexterity, they should see that we view it with disapprobation.

TRUTH AND SINCERITY.

We should labour to excite in children a detestation of all that is mean, cunning, or false, and to inspire them with a spirit of openness, honour, and candour, making them feel how noble it is, not merely to speak the truth, but to speak the simple, unaltered truth, whether it tell for or against themselves. But to effect this, our example must uniformly concur with our instructions. Our whole behaviour to them should be fair and without artifice. We should never deceive them, never employ cunning to gain our ends, or to spare present trouble. For instance, to assure a child that the medicine he is to take is pleasant, when it is not so. Artifice is generally detected, even by children. There is much in the old proverb, "a cunning trick helps but once, and hinders ever after."

Great caution is required in making promises : but when made, children should see that we are rigid in performing them : our word passed must not be broken.

The meanness of talebearing and detraction should be strongly impressed upon the mind in early life : and children reminded, that, not only duty, but

sense of honour, should lead them not to speak that of an absent person, which they would not speak were he present.

If we have grounds to suppose a child guilty of misconduct, it is better to ascertain the truth by our own observation, or the evidence of others, than by a forced confession from himself. Yet sometimes it may be necessary to question him in order to find out the certainty. This must be done with great caution, not with that vehemence and hurry so commonly employed on such occasions; but with calmness and affection; cautioning him against answering in haste; reminding him of the importance and happy consequences of speaking truth; of our willingness to forgive, if he freely confesses his fault, and shows himself upright and honourable in his conduct.

And to establish a habitual regard to the principle of honesty, children should not be permitted to pick up the smallest article without inquiring to whom it belongs. This easy rule, and asking leave, even when very young, before they take any thing, will give them a strong regard to the property of others. To habituate children to ask permission, is equivalent to seeking advice in more advanced years.

THE INQUISITIVENESS OF CHILDREN.

“One of the distinctive qualities of our nature, is the principle of curiosity. The disposition to pry out the *how* and the *why*, is sometimes seen from the very cradle; and is always to be regarded as an auspicious token: it being in fact the germen of all future improvement; the genuine bud of intellectual fruit. Nor is it scarcely conceivable, how great advantage might be taken of such a toward disposition, were it under the constant management of superior skill united with patient industry. But, in the nurture and training up of children, this impor-

tant particular, is, for the most part, overlooked, and their early curiosity either damped or misdirected. And in this way many are made dullards, or frivolous, who might have been shaped to intellectual excellence."

"Children come into a world, where, to them, every thing is new and strange; a world, of which, and of all therein, they are utterly ignorant. And how do these newly-born citizens of the world act? Why, just as persons come to years, would act under like circumstances. God hath given them an appetite for knowledge, and they seek after it with ardency. *What is this? What is that made for? How is it done, and why is it so?* These, and scores of similar questions, are asked by children, and to *them* the information they inquire after is material, though their questions may seem trifling in the eyes of those to whom the things were long since known."

"Were their inquiries properly encouraged, it would lead them to think for themselves; it would put them upon the exercise of their reason, as well as of their memory. At the same time, if there were observable in them a forward pertness, or any real impertinence, it might easily be checked without damping their curiosity."

"I have seen fathers so stately and stern, that their children scarcely dare speak to them, and much less familiarly to question them. And I have seen schoolmasters who would requite the familiar question of a little pupil, with a frightening frown, if not with a hard blow." Thus the young mind is pinioned, and then bid to soar.

At this uninformed period of life, children are not only inquisitive, but ready to believe every thing they hear. And if parents are deficient in giving them the information they are seeking, they naturally endeavour to gain it from others. And thus in-

correct, if not dangerous, ideas may be, and doubtless often are, infused into their unsuspecting minds.

FEARFULNESS AND FORTITUDE.

Fear is an infirmity, which if suffered to gain the ascendancy, is most enslaving to the mind. To secure our children from all unnecessary and imaginary fears, they should, as far as possible, be guarded from every thing likely to excite sudden alarm, or to terrify the imagination. Stories about ghosts, apparitions, extraordinary dreams, and all other gloomy and mysterious tales, should never be named in their presence.

How cruel, then, *purposely* to excite in them false terrors; as by threatening them with "mad dog," or "black man who comes for naughty children," &c. Or, in order to hinder them from touching what they ought not, to tell them "it will bite." By such means, they may acquire imaginary terrors, that may accompany them through life. For it is a well-known fact, that there are many sensible persons who are slaves through life to the terrors of darkness, in consequence of their having been frightened when children, by the foolish stories of ghosts and apparitions being seen in the dark. Here ghosts and darkness are associated together in childhood, and impressed by the passion of fear: and though reason in riper age, has pointed out the absurdity, it has not always been able to extirpate the fear.

By guarding children from useless fears, one step is gained towards the cultivation of fortitude: yet another and important one is, to infuse into the system of education a certain portion of resolution and hardihood; to train up those entrusted to us to be inhabitants of a world, in which they are to meet with pain, sickness, dangers, and sorrows; and in

which, consequently, self-denial and fortitude are essential. While we wish to avoid every appearance of unkindness and want of feeling, let us not err, by adopting too tender and enervating a system. Let us distinguish, and maintain the distinction, between the wants of nature, and those of imagination; bring up our children as little dependent as possible upon bodily indulgence and luxuries; accustom them to the plainest food, to beds not too soft, airy rooms, and, as far as their constitutions will allow, to hardy habits.

For children to have every thing done for them, tends to enervate the mind, and render them helpless beings, unable to contrive for themselves. The "I can't," with which children are apt to reply to commands given them, is rarely to be admitted.

PRIDE AND VANITY.

There are few defects which appear earlier in children than pride and vanity. They delight in being noticed, praised, and admired. It is therefore of no small consequence, amidst all our affectionate attentions to them, that we guard against nurturing their self-love, self-importance, and fondness for admiration. We may show them every kindness, we may amuse and make them happy, without flattering their vanity. But here many people are apt to mistake; instead of encouragement judiciously administered, as a just reward of merit, and a stimulus to what is good, remarks are too often made on their persons, their carriage, and their dress. And their pleasing sayings, are not only eagerly listened to, but repeated to others in their presence. The ill effects of which are unavoidable.

And is it not more than probable, that parents frequently cultivate the seeds of pride and vanity in their children, by the finery of the dress which they

put on them. Hence they become captives to the frivolousness of fashion. And then, present dress, however good, must, if not modish, be thrown off, and one having the charm of novelty take its place.—Christian simplicity certainly demands a reform in this particular.

INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY.

Idleness is an inlet to most other vices; while, by industry, the powers of the mind are turned to good account. Usefulness of character depends much on diligence. Early to accustom children to industry, application and perseverance, is a necessary part of education. If indulged in idleness when young, application to business will afterwards be irksome. They should early be made sensible of the value of time; they should be made to understand that no economy is so essential as the economy of time; and that, as by squandering pence, we are very soon deprived of pounds; so, by wasting minutes, we shall lose not only hours, but days and months. We must endeavour to inspire children with the spirit inculcated in the following precept: "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

For a young woman to have been properly instructed in the management of a family, is far more essential to her than all the elegant arts on which so much time and expense are by some bestowed. If she has been made acquainted with every particular circumstance of a servant's duty, takes an active part in family concerns, combines frugality with plenty, retrenches superfluous cost and decoration, and thus is fitted to meet adverse as well as prosperous circumstances, she will be useful and respectable in her father's family, and particularly so in a married state: When domestic economy is viewed

in this light, is there a woman that would disdain to rank it among her accomplishments? Or a sensible man who would not prize it in his wife?

Whatever may be our occupation in life, there is in an industrious, upright, liberal and benevolent mind, and inherent dignity, that will meet with esteem from all whose opinion deserves to be regarded.

And as frugality and industry are by no means necessarily connected with an avaricious disposition, the most opulent parent ought not to be ashamed to adopt, in the economical education of his children, the excellent motto, "waste not, want not." Early habits of care, and an early aversion and contempt of waste, are interesting lessons for children to learn. The most industrious and frugal are frequently the most liberal and benevolent. And it is upon this principle, that children should be taught, not only to save, but that they are responsible for making a right use of what they save, or possess.

While encouraging children in industrious habits, let us not forget or neglect to encourage industry at their books, and to afford them opportunities for mental improvement, to qualify them rightly to enjoy the necessary intercourse with mankind.

MANNERS.

Good manners add lustre to virtue. Their object is to oblige, and pay proper attention to others. In order therefore to inspire children with such a disposition, we should endeavour early to infuse the spirit of that precept—"Honour all men;" And teach them, that kindness and civility are due to all: that a haughty, positive, or contemptuous manner, is not only ill bred, but unchristian; and especially to be avoided in our behaviour to servants, or those in inferior stations in life. To these they should never be suffered to behave with haughtiness, nor even to

speak with a commanding tone of voice ; as it will have a direct tendency to cherish pride and self-importance.

It is also necessary to guard children against vulgar habits, as loud talking and laughing.—Whispering in company does not comport with good manners, and mimicry is the favourite amusement of low minds. Speaking, when it interrupts reading or conversation, and the habit of contradicting others, are improper, and should be checked.

At meals, children of suitable age should be admitted to table with the family, when convenient.—This privilege will improve their manners, and tend to prevent bashfulness and awkwardness.

METHOD AND ORDER.

Method is the hinge of business ; and it requires order and punctuality. These we must teach our children principally by example. Let them see, that we rise early, have regular hours, as much as may be, for the employments of the day ; that we are careful to do one thing at a time, and every thing in its right time ; that we stick to the business we have in hand, as far as unexpected incidents allow ; that we never put off till to-morrow what may be done to-day ; that we adopt the maxim, “ a place for every thing, and every thing in its place.” Let them be taught also, that what is worth doing, is worth doing well.

It is for want of method and order, that some people, who have much to do, get but little done. They are frequently in a hurry, have many things begun, but none finished.

Whatever children hear read, or spoken of in terms of approbation, will give a strong bias to their minds. Hence the necessity of guarding conversation in families, as well as excluding books and

companions that have a tendency to vitiate the heart.

RELIGION.

It is of the utmost consequence, that the first impressions made on the minds of children respecting the Divine Being, be correct and encouraging.—They should be taught that He is the Giver of every good, the Author of all felicity, that He is love itself, and delights in our happiness. Impressions like these, and having religion and happiness connected together in their view, will be likely to beget the feelings of love, reverence, and gratitude, and be a better foundation for a practical assent to the truths of the gospel, than creeds and catechism got by heart. And as age unfolds the capacity, the doctrine of christianity ought to be presented in the simplest forms; no religious instruction is better suited to the minds of children, than that derived from the precepts and example of Christ; and no part of his example more calculated to touch their hearts, than the compassion and the tenderness, which he so perfectly displayed.

It is by refining and exalting the motives to action, that parents promote the happiness of their families. Therefore, it is a very interesting part of religious education, to fix on the young mind a conviction, that religion is not an occasional act, but the effect of the in-dwelling principle of divine grace, by which their common acts are to be governed, and their evil propensities subdued; that the indissoluble connexion between religion and moral rectitude must ever be maintained; *if ye love God, ye will avoid evil, and do good.*—And that it is the purity of the motive, which not only gives worth and beauty, but which, in a christian sense, gives life and efficacy to the best actions. And without pure motives, acts

of devotion, however splendid, will not be accepted in the divine sight.

When love to God, and love and good will towards men, have been early impressed, as essential doctrines of christianity, and the mind has been taught to approve itself, by its consciousness of having performed its duty : young people entering into life to act for themselves, who have imbibed these principles, will not commonly, it is apprehended, deviate widely from rectitude of conduct.

May parents, therefore, not suffer the lively season, when the hearts of their children are flexible, and their love ardent, to pass by, without impressing by example and precept, those principles, on which their happiness in time and eternity depends.

† In closing these hints, permit me to say, that, whatever may be the event of a pious education to the child, it is very important to parents to have acquitted themselves of the incumbent duty, of "training their child in the way he should go." Those, who, though mourning over a prodigal child, can appeal to the Searcher of hearts, for having endeavoured, to the best of their knowledge, to lead him in the path of rectitude, must have feelings and reflections widely different from those parents, who, though also lamenting the evil course of their offspring, feel their own neglected duty of seasonable care and instruction, greatly increasing the bitterness of their sorrows.

FINIS.

SENTIMENTS
OF
SEVERAL EMINENT PERSONS
ON THE
TENDENCY
OF
Dramatic Entertainments,
AND OTHER
AMUSEMENTS;

WITH
A FEW REFLECTIONS ON THE SAME SUBJECT SUBJOINED.

BY LINDLEY MURRAY.

WITH ADDITIONS.

Be wise to-day; tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on till wisdom is push'd out of life. *Young.*

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Introduction.



IN this age of extreme refinement and pleasurable pursuits, it appears to be almost hopeless, and may, by some, be deemed presumptuous, to attempt to draw the public attention to any strictures, or to the sentiments of any persons whatever, against the favourite and much frequented Entertainments of the Stage.—But, as we live in times of free inquiry, and when candid examinations of all opinions, decently advanced, are recommended, perhaps the following sentiments of several great and good characters, on the dangerous nature and tendency of Dramatic Amusements, may be perused with some degree of patience and attention. As, from the weakness of the human mind, its attachment to ancient opinion, and reverence for authority, there is wisdom in freely investigating some long established notions; and the result has often been a dissipation of error, and an establishment of truth; so it is of equal, if not of superior importance, to examine, with impartiality and care, many of our modes of practice, and established indulgences in

There is the greater necessity for this scrutiny of conduct, because action, more than speculation, forms the character; and because our passions, depravity, and love of the world, peculiarly dispose us to an attachment to pernicious and pleasurable habits, supported by the authority and practice of numbers around us.

Encouraged by these considerations, the Compiler has ventured to introduce the sentiments and testimonies of a few virtuous characters, against some indulgences which at present meet with too general approbation. The subject is far from being here largely discussed; a few only of the most interesting views of it are simply spread before the reader; yet, it is presumed that, if justly delineated, they are of such importance as to claim the most serious attention. To such an examination they are readily submitted; under a hope that, if conviction of their propriety should be the result, no attachment to former conduct, or present pleasure, will preponderate against the dictates of conscience, and that peace of mind, which is, beyond all comparison, a higher enjoyment than the most refined amusements of the world can bestow.

EXTRACTS,

&c.



FROM THE GREAT PASCAL.

“THERE is nothing more capable of letting us into the knowledge of human misery, than an inquiry after the real cause of that perpetual hurry and confusion in which we pass our lives. The soul is sent into the body, to be the sojourner of a few days. She knows this is but a stop, till she may embark for eternity ; and that a small space is allowed her to prepare for the voyage. The main part of this space is ravished from her by the necessities of nature, and but a slender pittance left to her own disposal ; and yet, this moment that remains, does so strangely oppress and perplex her, that she only studies how to lose it. She feels an intolerable burden, in being obliged to live with herself, and think of herself ; and therefore, her principal care is to forget herself, and to let this short and precious moment pass away without reflection, by being amused with things that prevent her notice of its speed. This is the ground of all the tumultuary business, of all the trifling diversions amongst men ; in which our general aim is to make the time pass off our hands, without feeling it, or rather with-

out feeling ourselves; and, by getting rid of this small portion of life, to avoid that inward disgust and bitterness, which we should not fail to meet with, if we found leisure to descend into our own breasts.

Having no infallible remedy against ignorance, misery and death, we imagine that, at least, some respite, some shelter, may be found, by agreeing to banish them from our meditation. This is the only natural comfort which mankind have been able to invent under their numerous calamities. But a most miserable comfort it proves; because it does not tend to the removal of these evils, but only to the concealment of them for a short season; and because, in thus concealing them, it hinders us from applying such proper means as would remove them. Thus, by a strange revolution in the nature of man, that grief and inward disquiet which he dreads as the greatest of sensible evils, is, in one respect, his greatest good; because it might contribute, more than all things besides, to the putting of him in a successful method of recovery. On the other hand, his diversions, which he seems to prize as his sovereign good, are, indeed, his greatest evil; because they are, of all things, the most effectual in making him negligent under his distemper: they do but amuse and beguile him; and, in the conclusion, lead him down blindfold into the grave. It is, indeed, one of the miracles of Christianity, that, by reconciling man to God, it restores him to his own good opinion; that it makes him able to bear the sight of himself; and, in some cases, renders solitude and silence more agreeable than all the intercourse and action of mankind. Nor is it by fixing man in his own person, that these wonderful effects are produced; it is by carrying him to God, and by

supporting him under the sense of his miseries, with the hopes of an assured and complete deliverance in a better life."



FROM THE PRINCE OF CONTI.

— "The call which men have for diversion, is not by far so great as is thought, and it consists more in imagination or in custom, than in a real necessity. Those who are employed in bodily labour, have only need of a bare cessation from it. Those who are employed in affairs toilsome to the mind, and but little laborious to the body, have need to recollect themselves from that disposition which this sort of employments naturally causes, and not to dissipate themselves yet more, by diversions which extremely engage the mind. It is a jest, to fancy that one has need to pass three hours in filling the mind with follies at a play. Those who find in themselves this need, ought to look on it, not as a natural weakness, but as a vice of custom, which they must cure by serious employment."

— "If the soul abandons itself to false pleasures, it loses the relish of spiritual ones. When one feeds himself with the vain pleasures of the world, the spiritual senses become stupified, and incapable of relishing, or understanding the things of God.—Now, among the pleasures of the world, which extinguish the love of God, it may be said that Plays and Romances hold the first rank; because there is nothing more opposed to truth; and the Spirit of God, being a spirit of truth, can have no part with the vanities of the world."

——“ Plays and Romances not only indispose the soul for all acts of religion and piety, but they give it a disgust, in some measure, to all serious and ordinary actions. As nothing is represented in them but gallantries, or extraordinary adventures, and the discourses are far distant from such as are used in serious affairs, one insensibly takes from them a romantic disposition of mind: the head is filled with heroes and heroines; and women, seeing the adorations which, in them, are given to their sex, have that sort of life so much impressed on their minds, that the affairs of their family and of common life, become insupportable to them; and when they return to their houses, with minds thus evaporated and filled with these follies, they find every thing there disagreeable, and especially their husbands, who, being taken up with their affairs, are not always in the humour of paying them those ridiculous complaisances which are given to women in plays, in romances, and in the romantic life.”

——“ Those deceive themselves extremely, who think that Plays make no ill impression on them, because they do not find them excite any formed evil desire. There are many degrees before one comes to an entire corruption of mind; and it is always extremely hurtful to the soul, to destroy the ramparts which secured it from temptation.”

“ One does not begin to fall when the fall becomes sensible; the fallings of the soul are slow, they have preparations and progressions; and it often happens, that we are overcome by temptations, only by our having weakened ourselves in occasions which seemed of no importance: it being certain, that he who despises little things, shall fall by little and little.”

“ It must not be imagined that the wicked max-

ims of which plays are full, are not hurtful, because people do not go there to form their sentiments, but to divert themselves; for they do not fail of making impressions, notwithstanding, without being perceived.—For instance, the opinion that the chimera of honour is so great a good, that it must be preserved, even at the expense of life, is what produces the brutal rage of the gentlemen of France. If those who fight a duel, were never spoken of but as fools and madmen—as indeed they are; if that phantom of honour, which is their idol, were never represented but as a chimera and a folly; if care were taken never to form any image of revenge, but as of a mean and cowardly action; the resentment which men feel upon an affront, would be infinitely weaker; but that which exasperates and renders it the more lively, is the false impression, that there is cowardice in bearing an affront. Now it cannot be denied that plays, which are full of these evil maxims, do greatly contribute to fortify that impression; because the mind being by them transported, and entirely out of itself, instead of correcting those sentiments, abandons itself to them without resistance, and delights to feel the motions they inspire, which dispose it to produce the like upon occasion.”

—“God does not impute to us the coldness which proceeds from the withdrawing of his light, or merely from the heaviness of this body; but, no doubt, he imputes to us that to which we have contributed by our negligence, and our vain diversions.

“It is his will that we should esteem nothing so much as the gracious gift which he has made us of his love; and that we should be careful to preserve it by giving it nourishment. This command he has intimated to us in the persons of the priests in the

ancient law, whom he ordains always to maintain the fire on the altar, and to take care to put wood upon it every day in the morning. This altar is the heart of man, and every Christian is the priest; who ought to be careful to nourish the fire of charity on the altar of his heart, by putting wood every day upon it; that is to say, maintaining it by the meditation of divine things, and by exercises of piety. Now, if those who go to plays have yet any sense of piety, they cannot disown that plays deaden, and tend entirely to extinguish devotion; so that they should not doubt, God judges them extremely guilty, for having made so little account of his love, that instead of nourishing and endeavouring to augment it, they have not feared to extinguish it by their vain diversions; and that he will impute to them as a great sin, the abatement or the loss of their love to him. For if a dissipation of the goods of the world and of earthly riches, by luxury and gaming, is no little sin, what must be judged of a dissipation of the goods of grace, and of that precious treasure the Scripture speaks of, which we ought to purchase by the loss of all the goods, and all the pleasures of this life?"



ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON, on the subject of plays, says,—“They are intolerable, and not fit to be permitted in a civilized, much less a Christian nation. They do most notoriously minister to vice and infidelity. By their profaneness, they are apt to instil bad principles into the minds of men, and to lessen that awe and reverence which all men


ought to have of God and religion ; and by their lewdness, they teach vice, and are apt to infect the minds of men, and dispose them to lewd and dissolute practices.”



THE FOLLOWING ARE TAKEN FROM THE WORKS OF
WILLIAM LAW.

—“THE pleasures and diversions of people are certain means for judging of the state of their minds: nothing can please or affect us, but what is according to our nature, and which finds something within us that is suitable to itself. Had we not inward dispositions of tenderness and compassion, we should not find ourselves softened with miserable objects. In like manner, had we not in our nature lively seeds of those disorders which are acted upon the stage, were there not some inward corruption, that finds itself gratified by the irregular passions that are there represented, we should find no more pleasure in the stage, than blind men find in pictures. If impure speeches, if wanton amours, if wild passions and immoral rant, can give us any delight, is it not past all doubt, that we have something of all these disorders in our nature ?”

—“You own that God has called you to great purity of conversation ; that you are forbid all *foolish discourse* and *filthy jesting*, as expressly as you are forbid swearing ; and that you are told, to *let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth* : and yet you go to a house of corrupt communication ; you hire persons to entertain you with ribaldry, pro-



that more concerns an Christian, or is more
tial to their salvation than this :—" Blessed :
pure in heart, for they shall see God."—
take the stage in its best state, when some ac
tragedy is upon it ; are the extravagant pass
distracted lovers, the impure ravings of in
heroes, the joys and torments of love, and :
descriptions of lusts—are the indecent action
amorous transports, the wanton address of tl
ors, which make so great a part of the most
and modest tragedies—are these things con
with this Christian doctrine of purity of heart

—" As prejudices, the force of educati
authority of numbers, the way of the world, t
ample of great names, may make people b
so the same causes may make people act, aga
sense and reason, and be guilty of practices
are utterly inconsistent with the purity of the
gion."

—" All people who enter into these hou
entertainment, or contribute the smallest mit
ards them, must look on themselves as having
so far, friends to the most powerful instrum
sensuality : and to be guilty of contributing

ence, we are apt to take a great deal of merit to ourselves ; we presently conclude, that we are part-takers of all that is good and praise-worthy in it, of all the benefit that arises from it, because we are contributors towards it. A man does not think that he has no share in some public charity, because he is but one in ten thousand that contribute towards it ; but if it be a religious charity, and attended with great and happy effects, his conscience tells him, that he is a sharer of all that great good to which he contributed. Now, let this teach us how we ought to judge of the guilt of encouraging any thing that is bad, either with our consent, our money, or our presence. We must not consider how much our single part contributes towards it, how much less we contribute than several thousands of other people ; but we must look at the whole thing in itself ; and whatever there is of evil in it, or whatever evil arises from it, we must charge ourselves with a share of the whole guilt of so great an evil.

—“ People of fashion and quality have great advantage above the vulgar ; their condition and education give them a liveliness and brightness of parts, from whence one might justly expect a more exalted virtue. How comes it then, that we see as ill morals, as little religious wisdom, and as great disorders among them, as among the most rude, uneducated part of the world ? It is because *the politeness of their lives, their course of diversions and amusements, and their way of spending their time, as much extinguish the wisdom and light of religion, as the grossness and ignorance of the dullest part of the world.—Any way of life that darkens our minds, that misemploys our understanding, that fills us with a trifling spirit, that disorders our passions, that separates us from the Spirit of God, is the same certain*

road to destruction, whether it arise from stupid sensuality, rude ignorance, or polite pleasures. Had any one therefore, the power of an apostle, or the tongue of an angel, it would be well employed, in exposing, and dissuading from those ways of life, which wealth, corruption, and extreme politeness, have brought among us. We, indeed, only call them diversions; but they do the whole work of idolatry and infidelity, and fill people with so much blindness and hardness of heart, that they neither live by wisdom, nor feel the want of it, but are content to play away their lives with scarce any attention to the approaching scenes of death, judgment, and eternity."



FROM HANNAH MORE'S "STRICTURES ON THE
MODERN SYSTEM OF FEMALE EDUCATION."

"I would take leave of those amiable and not ill-disposed young persons, who complain of the rigour of human prohibitions, and declare, "they meet with no such strictness in the Gospel," by asking them, with the most affectionate earnestness, if they can conscientiously reconcile their nightly attendance at every public place which they frequent, with such precepts as the following: "Redeeming the time:"—"Watch and pray:"—"Watch, for ye know not at what time your Lord cometh:"—"Abstain from *all appearance* of evil:"—"Set your affections on things above."

"And I would venture to offer one criterion, by which the persons in question may be enabled to

decide on the positive innocence and safety of such diversions ; I mean, provided they are sincere in their scrutiny and honest in their avowal, If, on their return at night from those places, they find they can retire, and “commune with their own hearts ;” if they find the love of God operating with undiminished force on their minds ; if they can “bring every thought into subjection,” and concentrate every wandering imagination ; if they can soberly examine into their own state of mind ; I do not say if they can do all this perfectly and without distraction ; (for who can do this at any time ?) but if they can do it with the same *degree* of seriousness, pray with the same *degree* of fervour, and renounce the world in as great a *measure* as at other times ; and if they can lie down with a peaceful consciousness of having avoided in the evening “that temptation” which they had prayed not to “be led” into in the morning, they may then more reasonably hope that all is well, and that they are not speaking false peace to their hearts.

“If this test were fairly used ; if this experiment were honestly tried ; if this examination were conscientiously made, may we not without offence presume to ask,—*Could* our numerous places of public resort, *could* our ever-multiplying scenes of more select but not less dangerous diversion, nightly overflow with an excess hitherto unparalleled in the annals of pleasure ?”

I am well aware that I am now about
on very tender ground : but it would be an
improper deference to the opinions and man-
age altogether to avoid it. There has been
argument concerning the lawfulness of the
amusements. Let it be sufficient to remark
the controversy would be short indeed, if the
question were to be tried by this criterion of love
to the Supreme Being. If there were any thing
of insensibility for the honour of God, and of
devotion in his service, which we show in behalf of our
only friends, or of our political connexions, should
we seek our pleasure in that place which the devil
has inflamed with wine, or bent on the gratification
of other licentious appetites, finds most congenial
to his state and temper of mind? In that place
the neighbourhood of which (how justly the
school of morals might hence alone be infer-
red) of intemperance, and modesty, and regularity, retire-
ment and lewdness are invited to the spot; and
habitually select it for their chosen residence :
the sacred name of God is often profaned,
pious sentiments are often heard with delight, and
vice and dissipation often applauded, which

of theatrical decorum ; where, when moral principles are inculcated, they are not such as a Christian ought to cherish in his bosom, but such as it must be his daily endeavour to extirpate ; not those which Scripture warrants, but those which it condemns as false and spurious, being founded in pride and ambition, and the over-valuation of human favour ?”



FROM AN ADDRESS OF SEVERAL CLERGYMEN OF
THE CITY OF NEW-YORK, 1812.*

“Theatrical representations necessarily tend to demoralize every society in which they are supported.

“While tragedy purposes by an exhibition of great and heroic character to cultivate a dignified morality, and comedy promises to laugh out of countenance every kind of folly and vice, both are false to their promise, and the unwary are grossly deceived. The idle and the profligate still continue to weep over tragical distress, and continue to laugh immoderately at the buffoonery of comedy, without ever undergoing a reform. It must be so. Infidelity and licentiousness are introduced, under every form, which would diminish disgust, or be calculated to render them agreeable to the audience.

“Familiarity is accordingly cultivated with the worst characters without necessity and without impatience, and often even with delight.

* This extract has been inserted by the American Editors.

"The affections which are exercised and strengthened at the play-house, are always those of mere fallen nature, generally, those which harmonize with open profanity, and, never, those which are exclusively religious.

"The sensibility, which is here excited and interested, is the creature of romance, which never occurs or acts in real life. In a city where real misery still calls for compassion and relief, there is no benevolence in contributing to the support of the stage for the purpose of exercising sympathy with ideal sorrow.

"The moral sentiment, inculcated from the stage with all the graces of composition and delivery, is uniformly separated from the motives and principles of christianity, is never tested by the precepts of the divine law, and is, of course, both delusory and impious.

"Revealed religion is never exhibited in its native purity. It is adulterated by an intermixture with fashionable maxims, and so reduced to the standard of unsanctified taste. Therefore the wicked return from the play-house highly gratified with their entertainment. And if any man ever retire from it, without disgust, it is because his taste has been corrupted by evil communications.

"Human pride and passion are fed by the productions of the Theatre. Desires and appetites are strengthened. The whole is a faithful ministry to the *flesh lusting against the Spirit*, and directly counteracts the grand design of the gospel of Christ.— So sensible must all the disciples of the drama be of this tendency, that none of them will ask, in going to the play-house, the blessing of God on the exhibition which he is about to witness; nor, upon his return home at an untimely hour, will he bow

the knee and give thanks to Jehovah, for the play and the farce which constituted the entertainment of the evening.

"Precious time is, profusely, squandered upon this fashionable folly. Great expense is incurred by it. In life it tends to eradicate all inclination for divine things; it renders meditation and prayer both wearisome and painful, and at death it yields no support or comfort."

The full effect of the corrupt tendency of the stage is known only in the lives of the actors, or in those haunts of dissipation into which profligates betake themselves from this chapel of devotion. The poisonous leaven, however spreads, with rapid but imperceptible gradations, through all the circles of gay life, and, from them, to surrounding society. It is more destructive to the interests of true religion, than is the canker-worm to the blossoms of the spring. ~~Whenever a rage for Theatrical representations prevails,~~ the religious taste is itself affected; and under the illusory idea of superior refinement, the enticing words of man's wisdom are apt to be preferred to the demonstration of the Spirit."

"Cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."—"Abstain from all appearance of evil."—"Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners."—"Let us walk honestly as in the day: not in chambering and wantonness."—"For the love of Christ constraineth us—that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them."

IT must be evident to every sober and
diced mind, that the sentiments of these
and enlightened persons, on the corrupti-
ence, and the fatal amusements, of the theat-
the most serious and attentive considerati-
to some minds, it is apprehended, they wil-
to be solid and awakening reflections.

If it be true, that many profane, indecen-
religious sentiments are to be found in the
dramatic writers, and these sentiments color
the softest names, and recommended on
by the most captivating characters and ac-
the senses and imagination are so charmed
elegance of the scenery, the richness of the
the power of the music, the address of the
ers, and the gaiety and splendour of the w-
rounding scene, as to deprive the mind of
flection, and agitate it too much for receivi-
fit from moral and rational instruction ;—
passionate and fascinating exhibitions in
delicacy of our best feelings, and gradually

and folly ;—if they chiefly address the inferior
ers of our nature, our senses, imagination, and
ons, and regale them with such high-seasoned
nents, as too often vitiate our moral taste, and
only indispose, but give us a disgust to every
osition that is not much refined, and especially
e Holy Scriptures, and those sober and reli-
s studies and engagements, which form the great
s of life, and promote our happiness here and
after ;—if the persons who attend these places
version, do neither look for, nor receive, any
us impressions from them, but, on the contrary
find their minds enervated and accompanied
a vain and romantic spirit ;—if they occupy, in
perusal and exhibition, in the preparation for
1, and langour after them, so much of our pre-
s time, as to prevent us from attending to neces-
and important concerns ; and thus also super-
ce habits of indolence and dissipation ;—if they
ind with flattering pictures of the world, and
ent, to the youthful mind especially, such highly
red and captivating views of human life and
iness, as are seldom or never realized ; and
e, besides an aversion or indifference to the
nary duties and affairs of mankind, not unfre-
quently produce deep anxiety, disappointment, and
content, through time ;—if it be of importance
reserve the principles and manners of the rising
eration pure and untainted, to prevent them from
ig governed by their imagination and passions,
to encourage in them modesty, humility, mo-
tion, and a reverence for piety and virtue ;—if
gion and goodness must be supported by con-
st care and vigilance, and our preservation from
depends on our avoiding temptations, and pray-
der for Divine assistance against it ;—if many

great and good men have borne public testimony against the pernicious tendency of these amusements ; and if numbers of serious and worthy characters of all denominations, have been convinced of the evils connected with them, and thought it their duty to avoid and discourage the attendance and support of them ;—if Christianity teaches us to consider ourselves as strangers and pilgrims, travelling towards a better country ; and admonishes us not to love the world, nor to be conformed to its vain customs and fashions, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and to maintain a steady self-denial against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life :—if these are the common effects and consequences of dramatic entertainments, and truths which cannot fairly be controverted, can we hesitate to acknowledge, that they are of the highest moment, and that it is incumbent upon us not to expose our principles and virtue to the influence of temptations, which are the more dangerous, as they are highly pleasing, little suspected, and seldom opposed ?

What advantages can they yield us, that will compensate the loss or hazard of interests so important ? All the pleasures, and all the refinements which their warmest votaries have ever found in them, are indeed a poor recompense for the corruption, extravagance, and misery, which they have too frequently sown the seeds of, and produced in human life.

It becomes us then, as rational beings, as Christians, who are called to renounce the vanities of this transient, precarious state, and who have a permanent and better world in view, to assert the dignity of our nature, and to act conformably to the importance of our destination. A few fleeting years

bring us all to the verge of an awful scene, the vain diversions and pastimes, which are so highly prized, will appear, in their true light, a most lamentable abuse of that precious time and talent with which we have been intrusted, for the great purpose of working out our souls' salvation. At this solemn period, the great business of religion, a pious and virtuous life, dedicated to the love and service of God, will appear of inestimable value, in the highest degree, worthy of the command and pursuit of reasonable beings. Happy will we be for us, if we become wise in time, take up the cross, and to all insnaring pleasures, for the few remain-ays of our lives, and steadily persevere, under the divine aid, in fulfilling the various duties assigned, and in making suitable returns to the Author of all good, for the unmerited blessings which he has so bountifully bestowed upon us. In these exalted employments we shall experience the noblest pleasures, and feel no want of empty and injurious amusements, to occupy our minds, or to fill up our time. In the scenes and productions of nature, in the useful works of art ; in the faithful narratives of human life, and the descriptions of interesting objects ; in the endearments of social and domestic intercourse ; in acts of charity and benevolence ; and in the pleasing reflections of an upright self-approving mind, we shall perceive also abundant sources of innocent refreshment and truefulness, as well as the means of enlarging our understandings and improving our hearts. By those persons, therefore, who have doubts respecting the propriety of indulging themselves in theatrical amusements, and indeed, may all who read these lines, seriously consider the hazard of indulgences, and give the subject that attention

which its importance demands. May those especially who are convinced of their dangerous nature and tendency, reject with abhorrence the solicitations of appetite and pleasure, and the fallacious reasonings, which are often adduced in their support. May we never be imposed on by the common, but delusive sentiments, that moral and religious improvement is to be acquired from such impure mixtures; and that the literary merit, and accurate knowledge of the human heart, which are displayed in many parts of dramatic works, will atone for the fatal wounds which innocence, delicacy, and religion, too frequently suffer from these performances. But being convinced that depraved nature will ever select what is most congenial to itself; and that the pleasures derived from refined composition, and the exhibitions of taste and elegance, may be purchased at too dear a rate, let us resolutely and uniformly oppose what we believe to be evil, however it may be arrayed; and do our utmost to discourage, by our example and influence, those powerful and destructive engines of dissipation, profaneness, and corruption.

FINIS.

A

Am. Rev.
1827

LETTER

ADDRESSED

TO A MEMBER

OF THE

LEGISLATURE

OF

VIRGINIA.

BY BENJAMIN BATES.

No. 19.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,

NO. 84, WATER-STREET.

—●—
1821.

The following Letter was addressed to a member of the Legislature of Virginia, at the time when a Memorial of the Society of Friends, upon the subject of Militia Fines, was laid before that body. And, as it is thought to present a just view of a subject of vital importance, both to individuals and the community, it is now re-published for more general circulation.

A LETTER, &c.



THE friendly manner in which we discussed together the principles of our memorial, (now before the legislature) induces me to hope that a few additional observations will receive a candid and impartial consideration.

It would be useless, I apprehend, in introducing this subject, to enter into any minute inquiry respecting the nature and extent of the rights of men in society ; or to examine any of the various theories of government to find in how many ways these rights have been abused. The American people understand this subject—they did not, in establishing the empire of liberty on the basis of equal laws, look to the pittance of privilege which had, in different ages, been extorted from bigotry, or wrung from the grasp of power. No—they were men, and conscious of their rights—they were brethren, and saw that their rights were equal. To preserve them, they did not set up human beings, like themselves, with crowns and mitres on their heads, and commit to their ambition, cupidity and caprice, for safe-keeping and distribution, those sacred immunities with which their Creator had endowed them, which he had made co-existent with mind itself, inherent and unalienable.

It was to preserve to themselves these inestimable blessings, to transmit them to their children ; to guard them forever from usurpation ; that, viewing

the whole ground of polity with a discriminating eye, they declared irrevocably, that conscience belongs to God, and civil government to the people. On this principle their whole political structure is erected : hence the law emanates, and every power in the government is bound by its authority. So it stands upon paper—but how does it operate in practice ? Is the liberty of conscience indeed preserved inviolate ? Do the laws impose no other restraint on religious freedom than are sufficient to preserve the peace and order of society ? Are none of the honest and inoffensive inhabitants of this commonwealth taxed, fined or harrassed, in their persons or property, on account of their religious tenets ? These are questions on which the patriot and statesman may ponder, but the answer is obvious and undeniable. The liberty of conscience is abridged : the laws do impose other restraints than those contemplated by the act establishing religious freedom—and a number of peaceable and useful citizens are exposed to fines and penalties on account of their religious principles. How is this infraction of natural and constitutional right to be accounted for ? It will not be said that either these people or their principles were unknown, when the declaration of rights was made, and the form of government established. It will not be pretended that they were excluded from the common privileges of citizens and the common rights of humanity.—No, but it is said that the government must be defended ; and they are therefore enrolled for the purpose of learning the use of the firelock and bayonet, and for acquiring the art of inflicting death with the greatest expedition and effect. Men whose religion is a system of universal benevolence, who believe that God Almighty forbids animosity, revenge

and violence, and who are assured that disobedience to his commands involves dreadful and eternal consequences.

This society maintains, with the framers of our constitution, and in conformity with the repeated declared sense of the American people, that government has no right to bring the laws of God and man into competition : and that there exists no authority in any department thereof to cancel, abridge, restrain or modify, the liberty of conscience.— When this declaration was solemnly made, the last time by the people of this state, and reciprocated by the whole union, the Society of Friends were exempt by law, as well as by their constitutional privileges, both from militia duty and personal service in war. Did not the law which afterwards subjected under heavy penalties to all the requisitions of the military system, abridge liberty of conscience which had been thus solemnly guaranteed ? and if it did, ought not an evidence of the fact and an appeal to the justice of their country, to be sufficient to restore them to their rights ? The fact is undeniable, the appeal is made, and its success perhaps, ought not to be doubted. But, in the mean time, the subject is variously canvassed, and many objections and difficulties are thrown in the way. We have referred, in our memorial, to the rights of conscience as a natural and constitutional privilege—but we are told that the liberty of conscience is an abstract principle, and as such, is not to be relied on in particular cases ? What is an abstract principle ? Is it some remote uninteresting truth, which may be indifferently remembered or forgotten ? or is it some proposition to which the understanding assents, but which is still to be tested by experience ? Now it cannot be supposed that the men selected by the

people to mark out the boundaries of the laws and to fix the limits of power, in a great, free and enlightened nation, would so insignificantly employ their time and abuse their trust, as to set down as a declaration of rights, any random proposition that might chance to occur to their recollection, as true. The fathers of American liberty did not attract to themselves the gratitude of their country and the admiration of the world, by writing merely what was true, but for selecting the very truths they meant to establish ; for drawing an insuperable, unalterable line of separation between those powers which a free people may confide in their government, and those inherent and unalienable rights which they retain to themselves. It was expressly for the preservation of these rights that the constitution was formed. Its barriers were laid strong and deep around them, and wherever they are broken down, tyranny and oppression will resume their course. Nor can it be thought that this liberty of conscience was introduced as a new or untried principle. The statesmen of our country were not such novices in the subjects of law and government, or so unacquainted with human nature, as to suppose that the right of conscience had never been tested. Nor would they, if such had been their opinions, expose the nation to difficulties ! No, these men understood their subject : its nature, its history and its importance, were familiar to their minds. They knew how readily the pride of opinion and the possession of power, combine to produce intolerance. They knew that a denial of these rights constitutes the worst species of tyranny. Nations have groaned for ages under its influence : and to preserve this country from a similar fate, they held forth the rights of conscience, not as an abstract metaphysical

notion, but as a living indestructible privilege, of which no law should ever deprive a citizen.

But why was it necessary to guard these rights with such anxious solicitude? Why enshrine them in the constitution, and protect them with such jealous care from the power of the legislature? Is not the government derived from the people? Is it not administered by their agents, and solely for their benefit? And cannot the people be trusted with the guardianship of their own privileges? The answer is plain—a government of the people is necessarily a government of the majority; but the majority, if they are not bound by constitutional restraints, may, in securing their own rights, overlook or violate the rights of others. But would it not be mockery to tell the minority, under these circumstances, that they ought not to complain—that their country is a free republic, and themselves integral parts of the sovereign authority? Would they not be sensible that their rights and liberties depended on the will, and lay at the mercy of individuals; and that, however many or few those individuals might be, and under whatever forms their proceeding might be conducted, an arbitrary government is still a despotism, and the subjects of it are slaves? Hence the necessity of constitutional restrictions; and when these are properly established—when the government simply occupies the ground on which it is placed, and exercises only the powers which have been submitted to its discretion, the decisions of majority become the legitimate rules of action; and every member of the community (whatever be his opinion of their wisdom or expedience) is bound to obey them. This is presumed to be the true definition of a free government. But of what avail, under any form of government, is the attempt

to enslave the mind? As soon would the academy devise means to arrest or control the revolution of the solar system, as the legislature of any country find laws that would bind the free spirit of man. How long has tyranny tortured its invention and varied its apparatus for discovering this grand desideratum?—Creeds, tests, and anathemas have been tried—stripes, fetters, and dungeons, have done their best—racks, flames and gibbets, have exhausted all their powers, and all have ended in miserable disappointment—and is it not extremely difficult to conceive how the notion ever came to be entertained, on this side the Atlantic, that the thing is still practicable? The genius of our country did not borrow even the mildest feature of such a system; and it is certainly not congenial with our habits of thinking, to suppose that the mind may be fettered by putting a chain upon the legs; or that a man's heart can be divested of its convictions by a warrant to take his cattle. But, admitting that the liberty of conscience is both a natural and constitutional right, and that it is physically impossible to control the free agency of the mind, still, it is contended, an expedient may be found which shall protect those rights from violation, and at the same time satisfy the law, which would otherwise infringe them.—Thus—if the legislature enjoin the performance of certain duties, on which it is supposed, the very existence of the government depends, and those duties happen to interfere with the constitutional rights of any individual, let that individual pay an equivalent, and be excused. If it be a military service, for instance, and his religious principles forbid him to fight, let him pay a tax for the support of schools, and make the tax equal to the military service. The argument,

fairly stated, stands thus—the legislature shall not restrain the free exercise of conscience; but they may levy a tax upon the advantages derived from the exemption. Have I any objection to the support of schools? Far from it—I should rejoice to see knowledge and virtue diffused among the lower classes of society; I would cheerfully pay an equivalent for the purpose, and might even be disposed to encourage it by a voluntary contribution; but when I pay a partial tax—a fine, I am neither discharging the common duties of a citizen, nor doing an act of benevolence. I am paying a debt—and for what consideration? Plainly for being allowed to enjoy the liberty of conscience. But I do not derive the liberty of conscience from the government; I hold it from a tenure antecedent to the institutions of civil society. It is secured to me in the social compact, and it was never submitted to the legislature at all. They have, therefore, no such privilege to grant or withhold, at their pleasure; and certainly no pretence or authority to sell it for a price. It appears then, that this exclusive tax for the support of schools, is a groundless and oppressive demand. It is a muster-fine in disguise—and violates the very principle which it seemed to respect.

But is it not unreasonable, it is asked, that our fellow-citizens, who believe war to be allowable and necessary, should be subjected to the hardships and privations incident to the training and service, while we, under the protection of our religious privileges, enjoy a complete exemption?—We answer, No. If those citizens do believe that war is necessary for their defence; if they conceive it to be their duty and their interest to fight; if it accords with their religious principles to repel

aggressions by the sword; if, in the full exercise of their privileges, they give to the government authority to command them in these services; this is their own act, and they cannot complain of the consequences! But a man is not the judge of his neighbour's conscience, and if the powers they surrender for themselves, involve the constitutional privileges of others, they are binding only on those who have consented to them.

May I enquire what it is that constitutes the obligation to fight for one's country? I mean to apply the question to a free people—for under a despotism the will of the master is the obligation of the slave.—What is it then, in a free country that induces a man to go to war? Is it for the protection of his rights? But what rights has he to protect, whose most essential privileges are already wrested from him? Or is it the interest which every individual feels in preserving his property—his home, his children, and his friends? Have not all some interesting attachment—have not all some endearing objects that cling about the heart? Is not the aggregate of these their country? Every man, therefore, engaged by common consent, in a defensive war, considers that he is fighting for himself and his domestic enjoyments: his home identified with his country—and he is using those means which his own reason and conscience approve for its defence? We too have homes, and a little property, and children and friends, whose welfare is dearer than life. We too connect them with our country, and for their preservation would make any sacrifice which our reason and conscience would approve. But these forbid us to fight. The Being from which we derive life and its enjoyments, the God that judgeth

the earth, has a right to prescribe to his creatures the conditions upon which his blessings shall be obtained. It is their duty to yield obedience, and in all events to trust to his Divine Providence for support: or, would it be better (as this might thwart our ambitious views, repress our pride, or interfere with our own plans of safety or success) to have a system of our own, adapted to what we conceive to be the true state of the world, and its moral government, and take our defence into our own hands? This appears to have been the prevailing opinion, and what is the consequence? The earth is filled with violence. Every nation is either preparing for war, or engaged in actual hostilities, and every man is required to cherish in himself those dispositions, and to acquire those habits of dexterity and skill, which shall render him an efficient and powerful instrument of death in the hands of others. The army cannot deliberate,—the soldier cannot reflect,—he is no longer to consider himself as a free agent—as an intelligent and reasonable being, acting under the law of conscience with an awful responsibility to his God; but, on subjects involving life and death and a future judgment, he is simply required to obey his orders—and leave the question of right and wrong,—the termination of his existence here, and his hopes of happiness hereafter, to be tested by the policy of his government, and the opinion of his commanding officer. And yet war is neither necessary nor generally successful in obtaining justice or supporting truth. Power and justice are inseparable concomitants only in the Deity; and the existence and prevalence of war, mark but the depravity of man, and his tremendous capacity for doing evil. What does it avail the hu-

man race, that the tide of conquest and devastation has rolled from east to west, and from west to east, and that thousands and millions of our fellow-creatures have been cut off in the midst of their days, and sent fresh from this life, burning with fury and panting for revenge, into the presence of a just God, to receive their eternal destination. Why should I recount the horror and the miseries that follow in the train of war, and triumph in its ravages? Who has not reflected on the subject, and who does not deplore the wretched state of human nature, whether in producing or suffering these disgraceful calamities? And is there no redress? Does there exist no power on earth or in heaven to arrest them?—There is, my friend; it were impious to say there is not. There is, in the religion taught by Jesus Christ,—which is able to reconcile us to God and to one another. It can divest the heart that receives it, of its propensities to wrongs and violence, for its sake. Thousands of living witnesses bear testimony of this divine principle. Thousands who would suffer any privation or punishment, rather than impede, by their example, its influence and increase. And ought it not to console the friend of his country, and of his species, to see its truth; and to be assured, by indubitable evidence, that it is possible to return good for evil—to love our very enemies; and for man, in all situations, to be the friend of man?

I am, with much respect, thy friend,

B. BATES.

FINIS.

REMARKS

ON

Troubles of our own Making,

AND ON

Habitual Discontent,

ARISING FROM

IMAGINARY WANTS.



FROM THE BRIEF REMARKER ON THE WAYS OF MAN,
BY EZRA SAMPSON.



NO. 20.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,
NO. 372, PEARL-STREET.

A small decorative horizontal separator with a central diamond and symmetrical flourishes.

1821.

REMARKS, &c.



THERE is in our nature such a restlessness of disposition, that we commonly make to ourselves more than half the evils we feel. Unsatisfied with what we are, or possess, we are still craving after something past or to come, and by regrets, desires, and fears, are perpetually poisoning the streams of present enjoyment. The weather is too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry. If we have nothing to do, time hangs upon us as an insupportable burden. If our circumstances compel us to daily labour, we fret to see others enjoying their leisure. Although we have food and raiment enough, and good enough, still we are dissatisfied that we are not rich. If, on the contrary, we chance to be rich, the weight of cares, the pains of getting, the difficulty of keeping, and the fears of losing, give us incessant disquiet and fatigue.

Thus mankind, from a restless disposition, render themselves wretched when they might be much at their ease.

It would be worth to one, more than any, or even all, the arts and sciences, *to learn the art of living happily*. I don't mean *perfect* happiness, which is not to be enjoyed here; but such a degree of happiness as our Maker has put in our power. The art

of living happily does not lie in stoical apathy ; for as to the real and sharp afflictions of life, while one ought "to *bear* them like a man, he should also *feel* them like a man." Nor does *he* know the sweets of friendship, who feels little or no pain at being sunder'd from a near friend. Much less does it lie in the lap of gross sensuality ; for the enjoyment of the mere sensualist is no higher than that of the pampered horse in the stable or the fattening pig in the sty. Indeed the brute has much the advantage, as it lives according to its nature and destination, while the man is haunted with a perpetual consciousness of the shameful degradation of his moral and intellectual faculties.

The following maxims or rules of action might, if strictly observed, go far to increase the happiness, or at least, to diminish the inquietudes and miseries of life.

Live constantly in the unshaken belief of the overruling Providence of an infinitely wise and good, as well as Almighty Being ; and prize his favour above all things.

Observe, inviolably, truth in your words, and integrity in your actions.

Accustom yourself to temperance, and be master of your passions.

Be not too much out of humour with the world ; but remember, 'tis a world of God's creating, and however sadly it is marred by wickedness and folly, yet you have found in it more comforts than calamities, more civilities than affronts, more instances of kindness toward you than of cruelty.

Try to spend your time usefully both to yourself and others.

Never make an enemy, or lose a friend, unnecessarily.

Cultivate such a habitual cheerfulness of mind

and evenness of temper as not to be ruffled by trivial inconveniences and crosses.

Be ready to heal breaches in friendship and to make up differences; and shun litigation yourself, as much as possible; for he is an ill calculator who does not perceive that one amicable settlement is better than two law suits.

Be it rather your ambition to acquit yourself well in your proper station, than to rise above it.

Despise not small honest gains, nor risk what you have on the delusive prospect of sudden riches. If you are in a comfortable thriving way, keep it, and abide in your own calling rather than run the chance of another.

In a word, mind to "use the world as not abusing it," and probably you will find as much comfort in it as is most fit for a frail being, who is merely journeying through it toward an immortal abode.

Nor is it more common than the discontent of those who have not even a shadow of cause for discontent. They are neither sick, nor pinched with poverty, nor called to sustain distressing hardships. They enjoy both food and appetite. They have raiment to put on, and friends to converse with; and if not rich, have fully enough for the moderate supply of all their real wants; yet these enjoyments, these bounties of indulgent Heaven, are poisoned as it were by the discontent of their minds, so that they are wretched amidst health and competence.

What are the illusions that thus obstruct the sources of enjoyment, and, in this favoured country cheat so many men and women out of the happiness of which Providence had put them in possession?—They are such as usually spring from one or other of the three following causes—Perverseness of temper—False theories of worldly happiness—The influence of opinion.

With respect to enjoying ourselves well or ill in life, a great deal more depends upon Temper than upon circumstances. Not but that our enjoyments are always considerably affected by our worldly circumstances and sometimes in a very great degree ; but if they are such that we are able to supply ourselves with all the real necessities and essential comforts of life, it is not our *circumstances*, but our *tempers* that are in fault, if we are not too happy to complain and too grateful to repine. The root of our uneasiness is altogether in our own minds, and without a thorough change *there*, no change of place or of outward circumstances could quiet us. What though all our present *ideal* wants were satisfied ? Other ideal wants would presently start up, and we should still be weaving for ourselves the web of misery. A temper that inclines to be satisfied with its present lot, is worth more than thousands a year ; whereas utter restlessness of temper is one of the greatest of misfortunes. A full half of human troubles would vanish, and the rest be lightened, if there were a thorough cure of this one scrofulous disease of the heart.

Our False Theories of worldly happiness constitute another huge class of troubles of our own making ; and the effects of these false theories are the more deplorable, inasmuch as the disappointments inevitably resulting from them sour the disposition, and thereby enhance the numbers of the wretched victims of illtemper. Corporeal enjoyments are few and simple : neither wealth, nor any of the arts of refinement, can add considerably to their number, or any thing at all to their relish. The pleasures of sense are limited by narrow boundaries which never can be passed without instantly turning pleasure into pain : and however much we may refine upon the pleasures of sense, our refinements can increase

from but very little. The most refined epicure, for example, has scarcely any more enjoyment of the pleasures of the table, than one who confines himself to the plainest viands. Wherefore nothing is more plain and easy of comprehension, than the true notion of mere worldly happiness:—the whole sum of it results from Health, Competence, the friendly Society of neighbours and acquaintance, and the pure joys of Domestic Life. He that has these, though he have neither wealth nor rank, enjoys about all the world can bestow. But these real and unsophisticated enjoyments, which are bestowed in fully as large measure upon the peasant as upon the prince, are too vulgar for the fastidious taste of visionary speculators; they must find a something that is quite above and beyond the blessings common to Adam's children, else they are determined not to enjoy themselves at all. Thus they lose the good that lies fairly within their reach, by laying out their endeavours to grasp an abstract something, that is conceivable indeed, but not attainable—an *ægis futurus*, which the eye plainly sees, but which eludes the touch and baffles all pursuit.

The last brood of artificial troubles which I purpose to notice, are those that are generated by the influence of Opinion; I mean not one's own opinion, but the opinion of others. We are such strange and unaccountable creatures, that we are more solicitous to appear happy than really to be so; and hence we willingly abridge our real enjoyments for the sake of seeming to possess enjoyments superior to those that are altogether common to mankind. Now the general opinion of society (a very erroneous one indeed) makes the pomp of show a prerequisite for being deemed happy, or at least for obtaining the credit of *refined* enjoyment; and this general opinion, how much soever we may despise

it in our judgments, has an astonishing influence upon our conduct and our feelings; an influence that precipitates hundreds and tens of hundreds from a condition of competence to that of poverty.

That *apt* Remarker, Dr. Franklin, observes, "The eyes of other people are the eyes that ruin us. If all but myself were blind, I should want neither fine clothes, fine houses, nor fine furniture."—It is even so; and it is this supreme regard to the eyes of others, that leads multitudes into extravagant and ruinous expenses. Without adequate funds, they build them fine houses and purchase them fine furniture and array themselves with costly apparel, that others may gaze upon them as persons possessed of taste and of refined enjoyments; and by these means they are presently stripped of the very necessities of life.

The true secret of living happily lies in the philosophy of contentment, which is of more value than the imagined stone of the alchymist, which turns every thing to gold.

It is to be lamented, however, that, in this age of boasted light and improvement, the philosophy of contentment is very little studied or regarded. From various corrupted sources we have learned, not to be content, but dissatisfied, with the ordinary conditions of life. And though not destitute of any essential article of raiment or food, we are ready to consume our hearts with vexation because we are not seated at the upper end of fortune's table. The semblance of happiness is more sought after than the reality; the mere phantom of it, rather than the substance. The simple plainness of former days is despised. Plain apparel, plain fare, and plain houses and furniture, such as our worthy progenitors were quite contented with

and very thankful for, our fastidious delicacy regards with scorn, and we needs must be fine, and fashionable, else pine our lives away in grief and shame.

Nor would it be either so alarming, or so lamentable, were this the folly of only a few. But the worst of it is, it has spread, like an epidemic, over the whole land, and throughout almost every class of society. Tens, and even hundreds of thousands, embracing both sexes alike, are the miserable victims of a morbid sensibility, and squeamishly dash from their lips the cup of ordinary comfort which they are presented with, because it is not filled to the brim, or because it is not spiced and sweetened exactly to their taste.

And where lies the remedy? It is not within the art of the apothecary, nor in the power of any nostrums of partial and limited effect. No, the people must be wise for themselves. The great body of the people, coming once more to their sober senses, must agree to return to the plain, frugal, uncostly habits of other times; and must strive, with general accord, to bring those long discarded habits into fashion again, and to render them honourable by the suffrage of public opinion.

As the want of contentment is one of the most grievous wants that affect human life, it ought to be provided against with the utmost care, and particularly in the following ways.

1. In training up children, scarcely any thing is of greater importance than guarding them against the intrusion of too many artificial wants. I say *too many*, because *some* wants of this sort do naturally and necessarily grow out of civilization; and it is their excess only that tends to discontent and wretchedness. Of that excess the danger is great, inasmuch as the effects are always deplorable.

What multitudes, at this very instant, are discontented and wretched, who might enjoy life comfortably had they been early taught to conform their desires to their conditions, and to act upon the principles of sober and rational economy. Nor is it of small importance in training up children, to accustom them to useful employ. A useless life is seldom found to be a contented one. Occupation is so necessary to human quiet, that to bring up children in idleness is the way to make them a burden to themselves as well as to the community.

From this twofold cause, the excess of artificial wants and the neglect of forming habits of useful industry in the early period of life, there has sprung perhaps a full half of the discontent that secretly preys upon so many bosoms. In short, important as it is to teach children reading and writing and the use of figures, it is of still greater importance to regulate their tempers, to curb their wayward desires, and to fix them in habits of industry, temperance and frugality; without which, the acquisition of learning could be but of little benefit to them.

2. The self-discipline of adult age, is an essential requisite toward leading and enjoying a contented life. A well disciplined mind studies to be content, and most commonly is so. It attains its desires by moderating and limiting them, and thus bringing them within the compass of its means. It accustoms itself to view, without envy, the wealth and grandeur which fall not to its lot, and which seldom render their possessors the more happy; and to be satisfied with, and thankful for, the mere necessary and common accommodations of the journey of life. In short, it depends much less upon our circumstances, whether we shall be happy or miserable in life, than on our tempers, and our view of things. Many enjoy themselves well in narrow circumstan-

ces, because they bring their minds to their situations. But when to narrow circumstances are added large desires and magnificent notions, it is *then*, and then *only* is it, that unhappiness results from the want of a fortune.

One of the bitterest calamities of life, is the sudden fall from affluence, or competence, to poverty. Not that what *we* call poverty, is so very distressing of itself. In some countries it implies a privation of the indispensable necessities of life, or the sufferance of hunger and nakedness : but *here*, few are so poor but that, with prudent care and assiduous industry, they may provide themselves with wholesome food and comfortable raiment. Multitudes, in this country, of the poorer classes, are neither the least contented, nor the least happy. Unaccustomed to the elegancies and luxuries of life, they feel no hankering after them ; and accustomed to earn their bread by their toil, they regard labour as no hardship. It procures them two very essential enjoyments—keen appetite and sound sleep.

No human prudence can always secure its subject from disastrous reverses in worldly circumstances. In times of old, “there came a **great wind** from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house” in which the sons and daughters of the man of the East—as distinguished for benevolence and charity as for wealth—“were eating, and drinking wine.” In a single hour, his vast substance, and the natural heirs to it, were all **swept from him**. And recent experience teaches, that in **America** as well as in **Asia**, a *great wind* may destroy in a single hour, what many years of painful industry had accumulated. The most flattering condition of worldly prosperity is sometimes found to be like the smooth-

ness of the surface of the waters, in their approximation to a cataract.*

But though it is not in the power of prudence to secure earthly possessions in all cases; yet often, and for the most part, they are lost by imprudence. It ought to be held in general remembrance, "that nothing will supply the want of prudence; that negligence and irregularity, long continued," will sink both fortune and character; and if there be but little moral good in worldly prudence, there is a great deal of moral evil in imprudence, or in such wastefulness and improvidence as not only lead to want and wretchedness, but often to the ruin or deep injury of creditors.

If we take a careful survey of American society, I believe we shall find that the more part of the families who have experienced a distressing reverse in their circumstances, owe it to one or other of the three following causes—the inheritance of wealth—the greediness of wealth—and the affectation of wealth.

"Riches make themselves wings; they fly away."—Now these wings, as of an eagle, that bear away riches from the places of their wonted residence, it is worthy of particular notice, are such as naturally grow out of riches; they are wings which riches make to themselves:—they are idleness, wastefulness, improvidence, and prodigality; all of which a very large proportion of the children of wealth inherit, along with their estates.

A great many fall into poverty, not for lack of industry, but from inordinate greediness of wealth. "They make haste to be rich."—Scorning the secure competence they already possess, or which is fairly within their reach, they put it to risk upon the

* Referring to the flood which suddenly befe! the towns of Providence and Newport.

precarious contingency of suddenly attaining the condition of opulence. Impatient of slow gains, the fruits of regular industry, they dash into hazardous enterprizes. If unsuccessful—and they have more than an even chance to be so—they are presently ruined : or if brilliant success attend their steps for a while, so that they heap up riches in sudden abundance ; this run of success expands their hopes and desires, and they plunge anew into still deeper speculations, till unexpectedly the fallacious ground on which they stand cleaves from under them, and their fortunes are all swallowed up.

If the two great destroyers which I have just mentioned, have devoured their thousands, the one that is yet to be mentioned has devoured its ten thousands. The inheritors of overgrown wealth are but few : and though there are very many greedy and rash adventurers, yet their numbers bear no proportion with the numbers of those who are ruining their circumstances by an absurd and pitiful affectation of wealth. This last is, in economics, what consumption is among bodily distempers, the most common and fatal disease of all. The affectation of wealth, or the vanity of making a show beyond our condition, in apparel, in the elegancies of the table, in furniture, and in every thing else that is thought likely to attract attention and admiration, is the consuming *Plague* that has already destroyed, and which is even now destroying, the earthly substance and comforts of innumerable families, who, but for this disease, might rank with the happiest of mankind.

FINIS.

THOUGHTS

ON

REASON AND REVELATION,

PARTICULARLY

THE

REVELATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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THOUGHTS, &c.



IT is very questionable whether much service is done to Religion, by undervaluing the faculty of Reason. Man, the only inhabitant of the globe who is capable of religion, is also the only one possessed of reason; and indeed it is the possession of the latter which renders him a proper subject of the former. Without reason, man could not be accountable for any of his actions.

It appears therefore evident, that religion is inseparable from reason; and if we examine the true meaning of those religious persons who are thought to undervalue reason, we should probably find that they do not object to the legitimate use of this faculty, but to the exercise of it in deciding upon subjects which are beyond the sphere of its powers. To assign it therefore its place, and to guard against its encroachment on any other principle in the mind, which ought to have a free scope for action allowed to it, form a part of the proper business of a religious person.

Reason is the faculty by which the mind compares one thing with another, and gives the preference to what appears the best. It may be aptly compared to a balance; for when several motives for acting or suffering, doing or refraining, loving or hating, are presented to the mind, if it be in perfect order, it indicates which are the most weighty, and which of those several acts the mind should engage in. Right reason, having sure grounds on which to argue, and no sinister bias to warp it, must always attain to a right conclusion. But reason, like the instrument with which it has been compared, is capable of being put out of order; and it may also happen that the subject to be weighed may be too mighty for the examining faculty.

It is amply proved by lamentable experience, that there are many causes which bias our reason. The most powerful of these are the passions and the force of custom, which more frequently mislead reason, than yield to its ~~on~~; and the natural temperament, over which it

has little control : and even where the influence of these is in great measure subdued, still the subjects to be examined are so disproportioned to the share of reason allotted to man, that the difficulties are not removed. If it were to attempt the investigation of Divine things, with a judgment unbiassed by either of the former causes, it would notwithstanding never be able to arrive at the conviction that its perceptions of the object of research were infallibly correct, unless aided by some superior information ; and the Christian religion teaches us to believe that this information or evidence is Divine revelation.

No created being by its natural powers can rise above its natural sphere. To reach a sublimer station it must be assisted by strength superior to its own ; a power equal to the height of its ascent. It is only by the influence of Divine illumination that reason is capacitated to mount above its sublunary limits, and in any degree to apprehend the things of God. This dispels the fogs of prejudice and passion, restores reason to its full and proper use in religion, and furnishes it with a clear sense of duty and ability to perform it. The faculties are thus brightened, and raised to a higher pitch of usefulness than could ever have been reached by them, unassisted by Divine grace.

Man, with respect to the Author of creation, is infinitely more beneath him in understanding, than a new born infant is beneath its parent. But as, when the child has learned to love the parent, and to obey his admonitions, it is protected from many harms, from which it cannot secure itself ; and furnished with many comforts, which it has no power to obtain : so, revelation is the warning voice of heavenly goodness, that preserves man from evils, which otherwise he cannot avoid ; and leads him to enjoyments, which otherwise he can neither taste nor conceive.

In those seasons, when custom or the passions, or both, strongly impel the mind to the commission of evil ; and when reason, so far from standing firm, is known to side with the enemy ; it is indeed truly desirable that some power should intervene, to rescue from an overthrow. When temperament, meanwhile, is affording its ardours,

which hurry on to gratification ; or its languors, which dis-
incline to virtuous exertion ; is it not then also truly desi-
rable that there should be found some effectual check, or
some effectual incitement?—or, to use the simple, ener-
getic language of the prophet, when a man is disposed to
turn aside to the right hand or to the left, that he should
hear a voice to instruct him, “ This is the way, walk in
it?”

Some have imagined it beneath the Divine Greatness,
for the Sovereign Lord of all, to stoop so low as to make
man a peculiar object of His notice and regard. To
such as mistake those sure marks of degeneracy, *pride*
and *haughtiness*, for greatness of soul, this may seem rea-
sonable ; but in Him to whom pride is an abomination,
and as distant from His similitude as darkness is from
light, it cannot have any place. What it is not below
him to create, it cannot be beneath Him to regard, pro-
portionably to the end He made it for ; and seeing man
was created “ for a purpose of His glory,” and to partake of
His felicity, it would seem to derogate from His wisdom
and goodness, to suppose He should look upon it as be-
low Him to enable man, to answer the great ends of his
creation ; which he could not by any means do without a
competent assistance from his Maker.

If the preceding remarks be admitted as true, we must
perceive that man is not a being quite so sufficient as he
often apprehends himself ; hence he should learn not to
think more highly of himself than he ought : and as a
large portion of the misery which abounds in the world,
may be justly attributed to this fatal self-sufficiency and
importance, it is very desirable that the truth of these
reflections should not only be acknowledged, but universal-
ly suffered to influence the conduct. But proud man is na-
turally averse to this necessary feeling of his dependence.
He knows not how to submit to be, or to think himself,
nothing. He would fain plume himself with some im-
portance, some estimation or deserving of his own ; yet
all his pretences to merit are false and vain. The dig-
nity of human nature consists not in self-sufficiency.
The most exalted of created beings, neither exist nor act

independent of their Creator; much less man, who, in his primitive purity, was made lower than the angels. He stands in continual need of Divine help; and his true dignity consists in being, by his reason, above all inferior creatures, capable of *consciously receiving* that assistance, and being thereby preferred to a blessed communion with his Maker. A deep impression of the truth of this doctrine would make a man afraid, not only dogmatically to determine, respecting Divine subjects, but even lightly to speak of them. It would make him seem even in his own view a fool, and often such, in that of others. This pride cannot endure, and what it cannot endure, it strives to reject. It is therefore at variance with this doctrine, and one must be subdued for the other to flourish. In the Bible there are many passages proclaiming the imbecility of man. These stand in the way of the proud reasoner's argumentation; and these therefore rather than suffer his career to be obstructed, he is inclined to disbelieve and to reject. That to which we incline, we readily embrace; and thus is ushered in that wide-wasting evil, Infidelity; the origin of which, the preceding paragraph is designed to describe.

The volume, which, by way of eminence, has the general name of The Bible, is well known to be a collection of books of various authors; written at distant intervals, and on different occasions; but all supposed to teach, either directly or figuratively, the practice of piety, and the means of man's acceptance with his Creator.

There is a general division of these writing into two parts, namely, those which relate to the old covenant, and those which relate to the new, commonly called the Old, and the New Testament. It may be best to begin the survey of these writings with the New Testament.

1. Before any book, professing to relate facts, can be entitled to credit, its authenticity and veracity must be established. Now there is no book in the world of equal age, whose authenticity is established upon firmer ground than the New Testament; so that if a sceptic, unable to withstand the arguments which it affords in favour of Christianity, should be disposed to reject it, he must be

driven to the absurdity of rejecting all the historians of the same age.

The apostles and evangelists were competent witnesses, and could not be deceived in the facts which they recorded. They do not pretend to give us an account of transactions done in remote countries, or which had happened in ages before their time, but of those which they had themselves witnessed with their eyes and with their ears. They had lived with Christ during his ministry; they had heard his discourses, they had seen his wonderful works, and consequently received them on the testimony of their own senses. If Plato has been deemed a competent witness, and in every respect qualified to compose the biographical account of his master Socrates, and of his discourses in prison, because he was present on these occasions, surely the evangelical writers are competent witnesses of the facts which they relate. For they were neither enthusiasts nor fanatics. And as they could not be deceived themselves, so they neither would nor did deceive others. They were men of probity and piety, who abominated a lie. They could obtain neither pleasure, honour, nor profit in this world, by obtruding falsehoods on mankind: but on the contrary, they were exposed to the loss of all these, and even of life itself, for being preachers of the doctrine of the Cross, and bearing witness to the truth of Christianity.

The profane authors, as they are called, though now held in general and deserved credit; and their narratives relied on, as the best source of information concerning their respective countries and governments, suffered a temporary eclipse during the decay of learning in the middle ages of Christianity: but the sacred writings before, during, and since the same period, have been uninterruptedly handed down from generation to generation: appealed to by both the friends and the enemies of the doctrines which they contain; and cited by writers of all ages, even the earliest, since their publication, in a manner which shows that they have always been such, or very nearly such, as we find them at present. Nay, further, notwithstanding they have been multiplied by manuscript beyond

any other book in the world ; which might easily occasion some errors, the authenticity of these writings is in no wise affected, and the uniform tenour of their doctrine is in no wise altered. The consequence is, that we must either dispute all ancient history, or admit the authority of the New Testament.

From the New Testament we learn not only the doctrines of Christianity, but the character of its Author.—In this character, we must immediately be struck with his power and goodness ; and it will be perceived, that the exertion of his might, was always a proof of his benignity. The evangelists record numerous instances of miraculous power which show him to have been in the possession of faculties far above human. Unprejudiced observers naturally and justly concluded, that they were divine ; and consequently yielded up their minds to the belief that his doctrine should be received. It is already shown that the history of these transactions is authentic, by an evidence which on other occasions would be deemed conclusive. To us, therefore, at this time, who are competent to estimate the force of evidence, the miracles speak the same language as they did to the earliest believer ; they prove the credibility, (alas ! that proof should *now* be wanted)—they prove the credibility, the divine authority of Him who performed them.

In the New Testament also not only an account is given of the miraculous works of our Lord, but we are further informed that he appointed certain men who were his witnesses, to whom he committed the propagation of the christian doctrine, and whom he likewise endued with the power of working miracles in support of their mission. They acknowledge that they derived their ability and authority from Him, and they wrote several books which concur with the doctrine promulgated by their Divine Master, in which they declare : “We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye-witnesses* of his majesty.” 2 Peter, i. 16.

2. This short view of the New Testament will be of use, in leading back the mind to a proper estimation of

the other general division of the Scriptures, viz. the Old Testament. From the decision given by Christ and his apostles, respecting that most ancient part, there is no appeal. We must consider their verdict as a revelation, in which right reason immediately acquiesces—knowing the Divine Authority by which it is pronounced.

Now, both our Lord and his apostles frequently mention the writers of the Old Testament; they always mention them in terms of high approbation; and sometimes plainly assert their Divine inspiration. In particular, Moses is honoured by our Lord with marks of singular approbation; a belief of his writings, is considered by Christ as conducive to the Jews' belief in himself, and their disbelief of them, as a bar to the reception of his doctrines. (John, v. 46, 47.) The apostles, also, speak of Moses and the prophets, as of genuine and inspired characters. This uniform testimony, therefore, of Christ and his apostles to the writers of the Old Testament, is the incontrovertible authority for their credibility and admission among Christians; and thus we have both the Old and the New Testament established upon a foundation, against which no reasonable man can object, without being driven to the difficulty of believing some absurdity.

The manner in which the sacred Scriptures have been transmitted to us, their language and style, together with the minute circumstantiality of the facts and doctrines recorded in them, added to the moral impossibility of imposing forced writings upon mankind—are all indisputed proofs of their *genuineness and authenticity*. Equally satisfactory is the evidence for the *credibility* of the writers. For they had a perfect knowledge of the subjects which they have related, and their moral character was never impeached by their keenest opponents. In most instances their accounts were published among the people who witnessed the events which they have recorded, and who could easily have detected falsehood, if any such there had been, but who did not attempt to question either the reality of those facts or the fidelity of the narrators. There is an entire harmony between the sacred writers and profane history, both natural and civil; and the reality

he principal facts, related in the Bible, is perpetuated commemorated by monuments that subsist to this day in every country where either Jews or Christians are to be found. And that the Scriptures are not merely entitled to be received as credible, but also as containing revealed will of God,—in other words, that they are divinely inspired,—we have evidence of various kinds amounting to moral demonstration. For, on the one hand, their sacred origin is evinced by the most illustrious external attestations, viz. miracles and prophecy, which they furnish with them the most manifest proofs of a Divine Revelation; and which it cannot reasonably be supposed that God would ever give, or permit to be given to an impostor. And, on the other hand, the Scriptures possess the most excellent internal characters of truth and wisdom, in the sublimity, excellence, and sanctity of the system of doctrines and morals which they announce, and in the harmony and connexion that subsist between the parts of which they consist,—and in their admirable tendency (which is shown by its effects wherever the Scriptures are cordially and sincerely believed) to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind, and the cause of peace and righteousness in the world.

Convinced of their incontrovertible authority, man resembles a child to which allusion has already been made. The child knows the parent's superior wisdom, and also his love and power. It therefore submits readily to instructions, the full scope of which it does not comprehend. So the Christian receives the Scriptures. When they treat on subjects above his comprehension, or when the inspired persons relate or prescribe, in the name of the Almighty, things different from what man's limited reason might be tempted to judge best, he does not therefore resist; he rather waits in humble trust, and at most suspends his judgment; attributing the difficulty to his own feeble powers, and not to any inconsistency in the sacred Word, established as it is by the voices of those whose authority he cannot question. This, his humility enables him to do with ease; but pride forbids the sceptic to do so, because he will have reason to be his only guide.

He arrogantly asserts, that he is not obliged to believe, and so rejects that which he cannot comprehend. His scepticism, like other habits, becomes strengthened by exercise; and some persons have become so blinded, that, because they were unable to explain the moral government of God, they have been induced to finish their career of unbelief, with denying that He exists; and yet these very men, with all their boasted powers, are totally ignorant of the mode by which their will directs the muscles of their hand while writing the record of their own folly.

The Scriptures inform us of an ingredient in the religious character, without which they declare it to be impossible to please God. Who then, that is desirous of pleasing Him, would want this qualification? How can a man be religious without such a desire? How can he hope for acceptance, unless this desire be fulfilled? This necessary preliminary of Divine approbation, is Faith. It implies belief, trust, confidence, and arises not merely from the man, but takes its birth from the operation of the Holy Spirit in him, which works by it, to the sanctification of the heart and the production of every Christian virtue. When the soul is fully possessed of true faith, it is at rest: for it reposes on the goodness of God; and hence may be discovered the reason that faith is indispensably necessary to an acceptance with him. Gospel faith in man believes the truth of all that is revealed by the Spirit, both in the heart and in the sacred writings; because it feels it, savours it, and is one with it. It not only assents to the scriptural account of the incarnation and whole process of Christ in Judea, but it also receives his internal appearance, consents to his operation, and concurs with it. Faith takes away the solicitude to know why one mode of salvation is proposed; another not. It believes that to be best which God has ordained; and it acquiesces, where it cannot fathom.

The fall, and the redemption of man, subjects the most momentous that can engage the human mind, and against which infidelity is often aiming its bolts, present no insurmountable difficulties to the view of faith. Well might our Lord declare belief to be the condition of salvation!

The scripture relates the fall of man ; and our experience and observation prove to us, that man is indeed in a debased state ; “serving divers lusts and pleasures, hateful and hating.” The scripture also gives an account of the occasion of his fall ; which was no other than not retaining his faith in the Divine command. It is also worthy of remark, that this injunction was not directed against what it called a moral evil : but its violation was immediately followed by the loss of that life in which the parents of mankind held sweet communion with their Creator.— Now how simple ! how little requiring the mazes of deep and critical investigation ! how adapted to “the way-faring man though a fool,” is this plain, obvious consideration, that if want of faith made man fall, faith naturally restores him ! If we pursue the subject a little further, we may recollect that the tempter seduced Eve by means of specious, though fallacious reasoning against the Divine precept and prohibition. So, in like manner, as perverted reason led on to the fall ; unenlightened and biassed reason still averts the sceptical mind from the offered restoration in Christ.

But, before we quit this subject, it will be proper to observe the manner in which faith effects this restoration. Not, by a mere belief of that which Christ has performed on behalf of man ; but by a full belief also in all his precepts, so far as they are made known ; accompanied, as it must be, with a conformity to them, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Then pride, anger, lust, deceit, and covetousness, must soon take their departure ; and the very kingdom of heaven be revealed in that heart, where humility, love, purity, truth, and contentment, have made their abode.

A great man in ancient time said : “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” This may be considered as an invitation to subject doctrine to the test of experience. And probably it will be found that if any will humbly and sincerely accept the written revelation of scripture ; and will set about the practice of a Christian life in good earnest, such a one will not be long without observing his own extreme inability to persevere in a steady course of true gos-

pel obedience. He will discover the want of some help and consolation ; of something that can strengthen his good purposes in the moment of temptation and weakness ; and calm his almost desponding mind, dejected under the consideration of his former failings and sins. He will find that he is not to expect help from the world ; for its pursuits are already become irksome. He will perceive the generality of his acquaintance to have little relish for religion ; and many of those who make profession of it, to be as weak as himself.

But the difficulty of obtaining an object, when the mind is convinced of its importance and value, may increase the fervency of the desire to be helped. Thus, feeling, from certain and painful experience, the want of a Saviour, the mind is glad to believe that there is one. It is the only source left, from which help can be expected ; and most rationally, though not by any perceptible train of reasoning, doth the soul address itself in secret supplication for his assistance. In due time, though perhaps not exactly when it is craved, the balm arrives ; the soul finds “ grace to help in time of need ; ” and experiences the completion of the promises of Christ as recorded in scripture. “ Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” “ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” So far scripture, as applicable to the soul’s particular state, is proved, and found true, by experience. By experience also, faith is strengthened and confirmed. The mind is not then disposed to controvert difficult or obscure parts of scripture ; for doubt, like other things, requires its proper soil to grow in. Those things which are manifest are accepted ; and no attempt is made, with unhallowed hands, to rend the veil from that which is more mysterious ; or failing in this, to invalidate its authority because it is beyond the reach of finite comprehension. Faith now directs the use of reason ; and when faith is once firmly fixed on Christ, the most implicit obedience to the precepts of the gospel, is an act in perfect accordance with the soundest and most exalted reason.

THE END.

RELIGION

THE

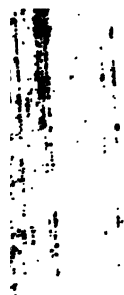
ONLY GROUND

OF

Happiness.

NO. 22.

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RELIGION
THE
ONLY GROUND
OF
Happiness.

MAN is placed in a world full of variety, and his ignorance makes him use many things very absurdly. If we look at the lives of those who live by no rule but their own humours and fancies; if we observe what it is, which they call joy, and greatness, and happiness : when we see how they sin and repent, and change from one delusion to another, we shall find great reason to be thankful, that we are not left to the folly of our own minds, or forced to take up with such shadows of joy and happiness as the weakness and folly of the world have invented—but that God has appointed a “straight and narrow way that leads unto life,” consistently, with the wise and benevolent design of Providence, and the necessity which man has for superior aid. Religion here comes in to his relief, and gives him strict rules for using every thing that is about him ; that, by so using them, suitably to his own nature and the nature of things, he may have always the pleasure of receiving a right, benefit from them. It shews him what is strictly right in meat, and drink, and clothes ; and that he has nothing to expect from the things of this world, but to satisfy his own wants, and then to extend his assistance to all his brethren,

that, as far as he is able, he may help all his fellow-creatures, to the same benefit from the world that he hath.

It tells him, that this world is incapable of giving him any other happiness; that all endeavours to be happy in heaps of money, or acres of land, in fine clothes, rich beds, stately equipage, shew, and splendor, are only vain endeavours, ignorant attempts after impossibilities; that these things are not able to give the least degree of happiness; and that, if misapplied, they will only serve to render him more unhappy by such an ignorant misuse of them.

It tells him, that, although this world can do no more for him, than satisfy these wants of the body, yet there is a much greater good prepared for man, than eating, drinking, and dressing; that it is yet invisible to his eyes, being too glorious for the apprehension of flesh and blood; but that it is reserved for him to enter upon, as soon as this short life is over, where, formed to an angelic likeness, he shall dwell in the light and glory of God to all eternity.

It tells him, that this state of glory will be given to all those, who make a right use of the things of this present world; who do not blind themselves with golden dust, or groan under loads of their own putting on; but who use bread, water, wine, and garments, for such ends as are according to nature and reason; and who, with faith and thankfulness, worship the kind Giver of all that they enjoy here, and hope hereafter.

Now can any one say, that the strictest rules of such a religion as this, debar us of any of the comforts of

hindered a man from choking himself with gravel. For the strictness of these rules only consists in the exactness of their rectitude.

Who would complain of the strictness of a law, that, without any exception, forbade the putting of dust into our eyes? Who could think it too rigid, that there were no abatements? Now this is the strictness of religion; it requires nothing of us strictly, or without abatements, but where every degree of the thing is wrong, where every indulgence does us some hurt.

If religion forbids all instances of revenge, without any exception; it is because all revenge, is of the nature of poison; of which, though we do not take so much as to put an end to life, yet if we take any at all, it corrupts the whole mass of blood, and makes it difficult for us to be restored to our former health.

If religion commands a universal charity—to love our neighbour as ourselves, to forgive and pray for all our enemies without any reserve; it is because all degrees of love are degrees of happiness, that strengthen and support the divine life of the soul, and are as necessary to its health and happiness, as proper food is necessary to the health and happiness of the body.

If religion has laws against laying up treasures upon earth, if it commands us to be content with food and raiment; it is because every other use of the world is abusing it to our own vexation, and turning all its conveniences into snares and traps to destroy us; it is because this simplicity of life, secures us from the cares and pains of restless pride and envy, and makes it easier to keep that straight road that will carry us to eternal life.

If religion saith, "sell what thou hast, and give to the poor;" it is because there is no other natural or reasonable use of our riches, no other way of making ourselves happier for them; it is because it is as strictly right to give to others that which we do not want ourselves, as it is right to use so much as our own wants require. For if a man has more food than his own nature requires, how base and unreasonable is it, to invent foolish ways of wasting it, rather than let his fellow-creatures have the same comfort from food, which he hath? It is so far, therefore, from being a hard law of religion, to make this use of our riches, that a reasonable man would rejoice in that religion which teaches him to be happier in that which he gives away, than in that which he keeps for himself; which teaches him to make superfluous food and raiment greater blessings to him, than those which feed and clothe his own body.

If religion requires us sometimes to deny our natural appetites, it is to lessen that struggle which is in our nature; it is to render our bodies fitter instruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace; it is to dry up the springs of our passions that war against the soul, to cool the flame of our blood, and render the mind more capable of divine meditations.

If religion calleth us to a life of watching and prayer, it is because we live amongst a crowd of enemies, and are always in need of the assistance of God. If we are to confess and bewail our sins, it is because such confessions relieve the mind, and restore it to ease; as burdens and weights taken off the shoulders, relieve the body; and make it easier to itself. If we are to be frequent

the sight of our true good, and that we may never want the happiness of a lively faith, a joyful hope, and a well-grounded trust in God. If we are to pray often, it is that we may be often happy, in such secret joys as only prayer can give, in such communications of the divine presence, as will fill our minds with all the happiness we are capable of.

Were there any thing in the world more worth our care, were there any exercise of the mind, or any conversation with men, that turned more to our advantage than this intercourse with God, we should not be called to such a continuance in prayer. But if a man considers, what it is that he leaves, when he retires to devotion, he will find it no small happiness to be so often relieved from doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose ; from dull idleness, unprofitable labour, or vain conversation. If he considers, that all that is in the world, and all that is doing in it, is only for the body, and bodily enjoyments, he will have reason to rejoice at those hours of prayer, which carry him to higher consolations, which raise him above these poor concerns, which open to his mind a scene of greater things, and accustom his soul to the hope and expectation of them.

If religion commands us to live wholly unto God, and to do all to his glory, it is because every other way, is living wholly against ourselves, and will end in our own shame and confusion.

As every thing is dark, that God does not enlighten ; as every thing is senseless, that has not its share of knowledge from him ; as nothing lives, but by partaking of life from him ; as nothing exists, but because he commands it to be :—so there is no glory, or greatness, but *what is the glory or greatness of God.*

~~that human life implies nothing of our own, but a dependant living in God, or enjoying so much life in God, so human glory, whenever we find it, must be only so much glory as we enjoy in the glory of God.~~

This is the state of all creatures, whether men or angels ; as they make not themselves, so they enjoy nothing from themselves. If they are great, it must be only as great receivers of the gifts of God ; their power can only be so much of the divine power acting in them ; their wisdom can be only so much of the divine wisdom shining within them ; and their light and glory, only so much of the light and glory of God shining upon them.

As they are not men or angels, because they had a mind to be so themselves, but because the will of God formed them to be what they are ; so they cannot enjoy this or that happiness of men or angels, because they have a mind to it, but because it is the will of God, that such things be the happiness of men, and such things the happiness of angels. But now if God be thus all in all ; if his will is thus the measure of all things, and all natures ; if nothing can be done, but by his power ; if nothing can be seen, but by a light from him ; if we have nothing to fear, but from his justice ; if we have nothing to hope for, but from his goodness ; if this is the nature of man, thus helpless in himself ; if this is the state of all creatures ; if they are nothing, can do nothing, but so far, and in such degrees, as the power of God enables them : if this be the state of things, then how can we have the least glimpse of joy or comfort. how can we have any

to that God, using and doing every thing conformably to his will? A life thus devoted unto God, looking wholly unto him in all our actions, and doing all things suitably to his glory, is so far from being dull, and uncomfortable, that it creates new comforts in every thing that we do.

On the contrary, would you see how happy they are who live according to their own wills, who cannot submit to the dull and melancholy business of a life devoted to God; look at the man in the parable, to whom his Lord had given one talent.

He could not bear the thoughts of using his talent according to the will of Him from whom he had received it, and therefore he chose to make himself happier in a way of his own; 'Lord,' says he, 'I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth. Lo, there thou hast that is thine.'

His Lord, having convicted him out of his own mouth, despatches him with this sentence: 'cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Matt. xxv. 24.

Here you see how happy this man made himself by not acting wholly according to his Lord's will. It was according to his own account, a happiness of murmuring and discontent; 'I knew thee,' says he, 'that thou art an hard man:' It was a happiness of fears and apprehensions; 'I was,' says he, 'afraid:' It was a happiness of vain labours and fruitless travails: 'I went,' says he, 'and hid thy talent;' and after having been a while the sport of foolish passions, tormenting fears, and fruitless labours, he is rewarded with darkness, eternal weeping, and *gnashing of teeth*.

Now this is the happiness of all those, who look upon a strict and exalted piety, that is, a right use of their talent, to be a dull and melancholy state of life.

They may live awhile free from the restraints and directions of religion, but instead thereof, they must be under the absurd government of their passions : they must, like the man in the parable, live in murmuring and discontents, in fears and apprehensions. They may avoid the labour of doing good, of spending their time devoutly, of laying up treasures in heaven, of clothing the naked, of visiting the sick ; but then they must, like this man, have labours and pains in vain, that tend to no use or advantage, that do no good either to themselves, or others ; they must travail, and labour, and work, and dig, and hide their talent in the earth. They must, like him, at their Lord's coming, be convicted out of their own mouths ;

be accused by their own hearts, and have every thing that they have said and thought of Religion, be made to shew the justice of their condemnation to eternal darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

This is the purchase that they make, who avoid the strictness and perfection of religion, in order to live happily.

On the other hand, would you see a short description of the happiness of a life rightly employed, wholly devoted to God, you must look at the man in the parable, to whom his Lord had given five talents. ' Lord,' says he, ' thou deliveredst unto me five talents : behold, I have gained besides them, five talents more.' His Lord said unto him, ' well done, thou good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler

Here you see, a life that is wholly intent upon the improvement of the talents, that is devoted wholly unto God, is a state of happiness, prosperous labours, and glorious success. Here are not, as in the former case, any uneasy passions, murmurings, vain fears, and fruitless labours. The man is not toiling, and digging in the earth for no end nor advantage; but his pious labours prosper in his hands, his happiness increases upon him; the blessing of five becomes the blessing of ten talents; and he is received with a 'well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

Now as the case of these men in the parable, left nothing else to their choice, but either to be happy in using their gifts to the glory of the Lord, or miserable by using them according to their own humours and fancies; so the state of Christianity leaves us no other choice.

All that we have, all that we are, all that we enjoy, are only so many talents from God: if we use them to the ends of a pious and holy life, our five talents will become ten, and our labours will carry us into the joy our Lord; but if we abuse them to the gratifications of our passions, sacrificing the gifts of God to our own pride and vanity, we shall live here in vain labours and foolish anxieties, shunning religion as a melancholy thing, accusing our Lord as a hard master, and then fall into everlasting misery.

We may for a while amuse ourselves with names and sounds, and shadows of happiness; we may talk of this or that greatness and dignity; but if we desire real happiness, we have no other possible way to it, but by improving our talents, by so holily and piously using the powers and faculties of men in this present state, that we may be

happy and glorious in the powers and faculties of angels in the world to come.

How ignorant therefore are they, of the nature of religion, of the nature of man, and the nature of God, who think a life of strict piety and devotion to God, to be a dull uncomfortable state ; when it is so plain and certain, that there is neither comfort nor joy to be found in any thing else ?

THE END.

THE

Christian Doctrine

OF THE

HOLY SPIRIT.

any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. *Romans,*
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THE
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE
OF THE
Holy Spirit.



THOSE that truly fear God, have secret guidance from a higher wisdom than what is barely human; namely, "The Spirit of Truth and Wisdom," that doth really and truly, but secretly, prevent and direct them. Any man that sincerely and truly fears Almighty God, relies upon him, and calls upon him for his guidance and direction, hath it as really, as a son hath the counsel and direction of his father; and though the voice be not audible, nor the direction always perceptible (or discernible) to sense, yet it is equally as real as if a man heard the voice saying, "This is the way, walk in it."—*Hale.*

The influence of the Spirit of Truth on the mind, has been maintained by the most eminent and pious persons of all ages; which is strong presumptive evidence, that it is consistent with the doctrine contained in the Scriptures, but more especially in the New Testament. Notwithstanding this, there is a class of persons professing Christianity, who consider this gift to have been shed only on the primitive believers, and that any belief in its existence in the present day, is irrational and enthusiastic. It is of the utmost importance that we form a correct and decided

opinion, on a question which must so materially influence our practice, and on which our final happiness may depend.

The weight of opinion amongst the eminent and good, is undoubtedly in favour of this doctrine, and to its influence they have attributed their stability and advancement in true religion; which ought to render us doubly careful, that we do not reject it without due examination.

On viewing the objections of those who profess to deny the influence of the Spirit, the following considerations present themselves:—That the effusion of the Holy Spirit was announced by the Prophets who foretold the coming of our Lord, and was promulgated by his precursor John, as a distinguishing circumstance attending the introduction of the gospel; which shows it to have been an *integral part of that dispensation.* **It must therefore continue** till the dispensation is abrogated; which cannot in common reason be denied.

That we are supported in this opinion, by a reference to the intention for which this gift was dispensed to mankind; which, it appears by scripture testimony, was for the purpose of assisting man in the work of regeneration. And this assistance must be equally necessary now, since his weakness and liability to sin and transgression, remain unchanged.

That, though the effusion of the Spirit upon many of the primitive believers, was attended with extraordinary gifts, to forward the purposes of the divine will in the establishment of the gospel, yet it was not universally so :

day ; not being attended with extraordinary gifts, but producing the effects of righteousness.

That the fruits of the Spirit cannot be different from, or contradictory to what is asserted in the scriptures ; and therefore a belief in its influence on the mind, cannot be enthusiastic or irrational, though it may be misunderstood and abused.

A few brief observations on these points may be useful to such readers, as have not been accustomed to consider this subject with reference to the objections stated.

It is undoubtedly the object of true religion, to purify the heart and conduct, so as to render us worthy of the divine acceptance, and the enjoyment of a state of bliss hereafter ; or, in other words, of an admission into the kingdom of heaven. But in order to this, we must in this life have undergone that change of our nature, which will in some degree assimilate us to the divine purity ; and of which the necessity is fully stated in the Scriptures. In the language of our Saviour, this renovation is called " being born again ;" and the same is variously named in different parts of the New Testament. This change, conscious as we must be of sin and imperfection, must be allowed to be fully consistent with our ideas of what is reasonable and correct ; but when the doctrine assumes the shape of a divine revelation, we are not permitted to doubt of its necessity. The sayings of our Lord, as well as the writings of his apostles, fully confirm it. In that conversation which he had with Nicodemus, memorable for its deep instruction in religious truth, this change is ascribed to the operation of the Spirit and it must be effected by the same means to the end of time ; our natural state being the same as it has always been.

His discourse with the woman of Samaria, points out a living principle, to be given by him, which is to produce eternal life to its possessor. With this sentiment there is a remarkable coincidence, in his declaration on the last great day of the feast; which the evangelist expressly declares to allude to the gift of the Spirit, which was to be shed after he was glorified. The parable of the Man and his Friend, is equally clear as to the divine intention in respect to this principle, and plainly implies that we ought, moreover, earnestly to desire it. And it may be here asked, as we are by nature so prone to sin, how are we to root out our evil propensities, but by some assistance of a *different* nature? What but such a principle can enable us to take up the daily cross to our natural inclinations? to deny ourselves the pleasures of sense, or the allurements of interest, when they are inconsistent with purity? The deficient practice of all mankind who have not their dependence on divine aid, is a clear answer to these questions. For, however fair the outward conduct may appear, if the source of action, the heart, be not purified, (which it can only be through the operation of divine power,) it only wants the storms of temptation to overthrow the fabric: and, as the nature of sin is the same in all, though its modifications may be various, so we are all equally in need of this assistance—the learned with the ignorant—the philosopher with the peasant.

Persons possessed of good natural dispositions, and placed in situations favourable to regular conduct, may have a sort of habitual morality, which leaves us nothing to accuse them of; and so far as it goes, it is well. But let them

That virtue which is not the effect of principle, is of very uncertain duration, and we are *all* required to *improve* our talents and advantages. We ought also to remember, that Christianity goes upon the necessity of a *change* of our nature and affections, as the only sure means of producing conduct, consistent with the purity of its precepts, under all circumstances ; even where our private interests and inclinations may be opposed to it. The work of religion, if properly undertaken, is sure in its end ; but it is of gradual, and sometimes, from the prevalence of our lusts, of painful operation. If our minds are sufficiently awakened to the subject, none will find time for idleness or self-security.

In those sublime and instructive conversations which our Saviour had with his disciples, a short time previous to his suffering, as well as in that ever-memorable prayer he offered up for them, he has shown that the great purpose of his mission was to reveal the way of truth, and to establish a spiritual communion and communication with himself and the father, through the Holy Spirit, for our help and direction in the way of righteousness. The necessity of *keeping up* this communication, in order to the production of fruit, is beautifully, and incontrovertibly set forth, in the parable of the Vine and the Branches. This spirit, he also declared, was to lead into all truth, and to reprove *the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ; thus comprehending every thing that can relate to salvation, or the knowledge of God. These declarations are in themselves decisive, and as they are elucidated by the apostles, they become further confirmed. The manner in which they have reasoned on the operations of the Spirit, and declared its effects, clearly

shows, that to it was attributed their progress in the Christian life. For though some had extraordinary gifts for the service of the church, as appears by 1 Cor. chap. xii. yet these being for specific purposes, could not be expected to be possessed by all. But the apostle says, "a manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." This shows its general intention with respect to mankind at large. And the extraordinary gifts which he enumerates, had ultimately the same tendency—by an unusual display of divine power, to strike conviction on the mind of the most unenlightened, as well as to remove the opposition and prejudices of the Jews, who had become so much attached to the rituals of the law, that it was with difficulty they would admit the evidences of a religion, so pure and spiritual as Christianity.

It is remarkable, that, in the chapter just named, as well as in that which immediately follows, the apostle earnestly recommends them to covet the *best* gifts, in contradistinction to those which were extraordinary; and that he concludes by showing what he calls "a more excellent way," pointing out the possession of charity, as comprehending the substance of Christianity, to be a transcendent object of attainment; without which, all other qualifications, how extraordinary soever, are of no value. And, in continuation, in the next chapter, the xivth, he shows, by a course of strong and clear reasoning, the superiority of the gift of prophecy, or "speaking to edification, exhortation, and comfort," over that of speaking with tongues; which further confirms the opinion, that the direct and permanent object of spiritual gifts, was the establishment of righteousness. It is therefore quite consistent

was firmly established, the miraculous gifts would be withdrawn; an opinion, which is without detriment to the continuation of those gifts which remain to be necessary in the constitution of a Christian church. Hence gospel ministry, as well as other qualifications for the spiritual service of the church, must continue to be derived from the same source; and is therefore not dependant on human learning or attainments, though our usefulness may be increased by the possession of them. Nor ~~it~~ any one suppose, that this opinion leads to enthusiasm or self-exaltation. Spiritual gifts are not at our command, and no man receives them, who is not promoting the work of redemption in his own mind. Every step he takes in advance, must be preceded and followed by a perception of his own imperfection and unworthiness; which must have a constant tendency to produce *humility*, meekness, and gentleness; and if these effects are not produced, such a person is deceiving himself. A due degree of earnestness and fervency in our religious duties, is, however, very proper; and must necessarily follow an advancement in the knowledge and love of God.

It appears, therefore, that those who ascribe pride or enthusiasm to a belief in this doctrine, have a mistaken view of it. Perhaps they have never examined the writings of the evangelists and apostles with sufficient attention; or have been misled by a strong attachment to pre-conceived opinions, which may have been inculcated in early youth.

It is not unusual for such persons to ask for definitions and explanations on this subject, which from its nature cannot be given. We may be very sure of a thing which, *we feel*, though we may ~~not~~ in defining that feeling to the

satisfaction of another, who is not inclined to admit it. Our own experience teaches us, how slowly we admit even matter of fact, when the mind is fore-closed against it; much more, things of a less tangible nature. To such persons it may be observed, that those impressions which are not received into the mind, *through the medium of the outward senses*, are not in their nature capable of explanation, except by their effects; in the same way, as many of our common feelings can only be explained, by a reference to similar feelings in others. We feel the influence of the Spirit of Truth reproving us for the evil of our thoughts and conduct, and constraining us to aspire after greater purity of life and manners, and humbling us under a sense of our weakness and imperfections; and having this feeling, we know that it exists, although the exact way of its operation it may be difficult to define, to those who are indisposed to acknowledge the same influence. We also find it conformable to those descriptions of its nature and effects, which we meet with in the New Testament. Our Saviour's words to Nicodemus, seem to confirm these remarks: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Those therefore who would deprive Christianity of its spiritual character, would deprive it of what is its distinguishing and superior recommendation. For from this cause alone, can arise that uniform and exemplary morality, which is the possession only of inward worth, and of a mind purified on Christian principles. Any person who will attentively read the New Testament. must be convinced, if

by Christ is spiritual in its nature, and that it must therefore have a spiritual *ministration*. It cannot be supposed, when we consider those pathetic illustrations of the paternal regard of our Creator, which have been given by Christ in his discourses, that our Almighty parent would require from us, a degree of purity which he would not enable us to attain. Indeed there is no adequate reason, why the effusion of the Holy Spirit should be attended with less power now, miraculous gifts apart, than it was in the days of the primitive Christians. Is not rather the fault on our part? Though all men have sufficient illumination to guide their steps in the pursuit of truth; yet if they are not sincerely* disposed to follow it, they must be deficient in that degree of faith which is necessary to the full influence of the Spirit. It is easy for a man to say he is a Christian, being so by profession. But amongst the primitive believers, no man would assume the name, who was not so in heart; since he had a test of his sincerity always at hand, in the scorn of unconverted friends, and the abuse of a prejudiced and hard-hearted people. Nothing therefore but a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and the consequent obligation to obey its precepts, could induce him to embrace a profession, which carried with it so many circumstances mortifying to human nature. The same sincerity of conversion would in the present day be attended with the same assistance and communion of the Holy Spirit, in that degree which our particular situation might require, in the sight of divine wisdom. I would ask any person of sound understanding, if it would seem consistent with

* The evidence of sincerity is—obedience to the divine law, so far as we know it. See James, chap. ii. ver. 14 to 17.

the divine intention, to introduce a gift, attended with so many extraordinary circumstances, and sanctioned by the descent of the Son of God, if it were intended to be withdrawn with the first believers, who form so small a part of the rational creation? Such an opinion seems irreconcilable with the *undiminished* power, the wisdom, the justice, and the beneficence of God. But on this, as well as on every other question connected with our well-being, the sacred volume is sufficiently clear, to common understandings; and a disbelief in any of the fundamental principles of Christianity, if examined into, would be found frequently to arise from a disinclination to submit to those salutary privations which it requires; but which are at the same time the only certain evidence of our faith and love to God. Let us not therefore deceive ourselves: if our salvation be wrought out, it can only be by those means which God has appointed. And if it should appear, that it must be effected through the influence and assistance of the Spirit, it is in vain for us to seek out another way. Sincerity and true devotedness only, are wanting on our part, to produce, through divine assistance all the beneficial consequences so strikingly expressed in various parts of the scriptures.

THE END.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

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TO

VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS.

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SELF-KNOWLEDGE

ESSENTIAL

TO VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS.



THE right improvement of the knowledge we have, is the best way to obtain more.

The great end of self-knowledge is self-government; without which it is but a useless speculation. And as all knowledge is valuable in proportion to its end, so this is the most excellent kind of knowledge, only because the practice of it is of such extensive use.

“Above all other subjects (says an ancient pious writer) study thine own self.—For no knowledge that terminates in curiosity or speculation is comparable to that which is of use; and of all useful knowledge, that is most so which consists in due care and just notions of ourselves. This study is a debt which every one owes to himself. Let us not then be so lavish, so unjust, as not to pay this debt; by spending some part, at least, if we cannot all or most of our time and care, upon that which has the most indefeasible claim to it. Govern your passions; manage your actions with prudence; and, where false steps have been made, correct them for the future. Let nothing be allowed to grow head-

strong and disorderly ; but bring all under discipline ; set all your faults before your eyes ; and pass sentence upon yourselves with the same severity that you would do upon another, for whom no partiality hath biassed your judgment."

For what will our most exact and diligent self-researches avail us, if after all, we sink into indolence and sloth ? Or what will it signify to be convinced that there is a great deal amiss in our deportment and dispositions, if we sit still contentedly under that conviction, without taking one step towards a reformation ? It will indeed render us but the more guilty in the sight of God. And how sad a thing will it be, to have our *self-knowledge* hereafter rise up in judgment against us !

"Examination is in order to correction and amendment. We abuse it and ourselves if we rest in the duty without looking farther. We are to review our daily walk, that we may *reform* it ; and consequently a daily review will point out to us the subject and matter of our future daily care.—'This day (says the christian, upon his review of things at night) I lost so much time ; particularly at —. I took too great liberty, particularly in —. I omitted such an opportunity that might have been improved to better purpose. I mismanaged such a duty—I find such a corruption often working ; my old infirmity still cleaves to me ; how easily doth this sin beset me !—Oh ! may I be more attentive for the time to come, more watchful over my heart ; take more heed to my ways !' The knowledge of a distemper is a good step to a cure ; at least, it directs to proper methods and applications in order to effect it. Self-acquaintance leads to self-reformation. He that at the close of each day calls over what is past, inspects himself, his behaviour—"

security, and those uncensured follies, that are so common and so dangerous."

And it may not be improper, in order to make us sensible of some of the more secret faults and foibles of our tempers, to pen them down at night, according as they appeared during the transactions of the day. By which means, we shall not only have a more distinct view of that part of our character to which we are generally most blind; but shall be able to discover some defects and blemishes in it, which perhaps we never before apprehended. For the wiles and doublings of the heart are sometimes so hidden and intricate, that it requires the nicest care and most steady attention to detect and unfold them.

For instance; "This day I read an author whose sentiments were very different from mine, and who expressed himself with much warmth and confidence. It excited my spleen, I own, and I immediately passed a severe censure upon him. So that had he been present, and talked in the same strain, my ruffled temper would have prompted me to use harsh and ungrateful language, which might have occasioned a very unchristian contention. But I now recollect, that though the author might be mistaken in those sentiments, (as I still believe he was,) yet by his particular circumstances in life, and the method of his education, he has been strongly led into that way of thinking. So that his prejudice is pardonable, but my uncharitableness is not; especially considering that in many respects he has the ascendant of me. This, then, proceeded from *uncharitableness*, which is one fault of my temper which I have to watch against; and of which I never was before so sensible as I am now, upon this recollection. Learn more *moderation*, and make more allowances for the mistaken opinions

of others for the future. Be as charitable to others who differ from you, as you desire they should be to you, who differ as much from them.

“Again; this day I found myself strongly inclined to put in something by way of abatement to an excellent character given of an absent person by one of his admirers. It is true, I had sufficient command of myself to hold my tongue. And it is well I had; for the ardour of his zeal would not have admitted the exception (though I still think that in some degree it was just) which might have raised a wrangling debate about his character, perhaps at the expense of my own; or however occasioned much animosity and contention. But I have since examined the secret spring of that impulse, and find it to be *envy*; of which I was not sensible, but to which my antagonist would certainly have imputed it. And had he taken the liberty to have told me so, I much question whether I should have had the temper of the philosopher; who, when he was really injured, being asked whether he was angry, replied, *No*; but *I am considering with myself whether I ought not to be so*. I doubt I should not have had so much composure; but should have immediately resented it as a false and malicious aspersion. But it was certainly envy, and nothing else; for the person who was the object of the encomium was much my superior in many respects. And the exception that arose to my mind, was the only flaw in his character; which nothing but a quick-sighted envy could descry. Take heed then of that vice for the future.

“Again; this day I was much surprised to observe in myself the symptoms of a vice, of which, above all others, I ever thought myself most clear, and have always expressed the greatest detestation

else could it be that prompted me to withhold my charity from my fellow-creature in distress, on pretence that he was not in every respect a proper object; or to dispense it so sparingly to another, who I knew was so, on pretence of having lately been at a considerable expense upon another occasion? This could proceed from nothing else but a latent principle of covetousness; which, though I never before observed it in myself, yet it is likely others have. O how inscrutable are the depths and deceits of the human heart! Had my enemy brought against me a charge of indolence, or self-indulgence, pride, and impatience, or a too quick resentment of affronts and injuries, my own heart must have confirmed the accusation, and forced me to plead guilty. Had he charged me with bigotry, self-opinion, and censoriousness, I should have thought it proceeded from the same temper in *himself*, having rarely observed any thing like it in my own. But had he charged me with covetousness, I should have taken it for downright *calumny*, and despised the censure with indignation and triumph. And yet after all I find it would have been but too true a charge.—O! how hard a thing is it to know myself!—It is with this, as with all other knowledge; the more I have of it, the more sensible I am of my want of it.”

The difficulty of self-government and self-possession, arises from the difficulty of a thorough self-acquaintance, which is necessary to it. I say a *thorough* self-acquaintance; for as self-government is impossible (I mean considered simply as a virtue) where self-ignorance prevails, so the difficulty of it will decrease in proportion to the degree in which self-acquaintance increases.

Many, perhaps, may be ready to think this a paradox; and imagine that they know their predom-

minant passions and foibles very well, but still find it extremely difficult to correct them. But let them examine this point again, and perhaps they may find that that difficulty arises either from their *defect* of self-knowledge, (for it is in this as in other kinds of knowledge, some are very ready to think themselves much greater proficient than they are,) or else from their *neglect* to put in practice that degree of self-knowledge which they have. They know their particular failings, yet will not guard against the immediate temptations to them. And they are often betrayed into the immediate temptations which overcome them, because they are ignorant of, or do not guard against, the more *remote* temptations, which lead them into those which are more immediate and dangerous, and which may not improperly be called the temptations to temptations; in observing and guarding against which, consists a very necessary part of self-knowledge, and the great art of keeping clear of danger; which, in our present state of frailty, is the best means of keeping clear of sin.

To correct what is amiss, and to improve what is good in us, is supposed to be our hearty desire, and the great end of all our self-research. But if we do not endeavour after this, all our labour after self-knowledge will be in vain. Nay, if we do not endeavour after it, we cannot be said heartily to desire it. For "there is most of the heart, where there is most of the will; and there is most of the will, where there is most endeavour, and where there is most endeavour, there is *generally* most success. So that endeavour must prove the truth of our desire, and success will generally prove the sincerity of our endeavour." This, I think, we may safely say, without attributing too much to the power of the human will, considering that the mind is a

free agents, and considering what effectual assistance is offered to them who seek it, to render their endeavours successful if they are sincere.

The last means to self-knowledge which I shall mention, is frequent and devout applications to the Fountain of Light and the Father of our Spirits, to assist us in this important study, and give us the true knowledge of ourselves.

This I mention last, not as the least, but, on the contrary, as the greatest and best means of all, to attain a right and thorough knowledge of ourselves; and the way to render all the rest effectual. And, therefore, though it be the last means mentioned, it is the first that should be used. Would we know ourselves, we must often converse not only with ourselves in meditation, but with God in prayer, in the lowliest prostration of soul, beseeching the Father of our spirits, *in whose light we may see light*, where before there was nothing but darkness; to make known to us the depths and devices of our heart. For without the grace and influence of his divine illuminations and instructions, our hearts will, after all our care and pains to know them, most certainly deceive us. And self-love will so prejudice the understanding, as to keep us still in self-ignorance.

The first thing we are to do in order to self-knowledge is, to assure ourselves that our hearts *are deceitful above all things*. And the next, is, to remember that *the Lord searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins*; that he, *the searcher of all hearts*, hath a perfect knowledge of them, deceitful as they are. Which consideration, as it suggesteth to us the strongest motive to induce us to labour after a true knowledge of them ourselves; so it directs us at the same time how we may attain this knowledge, viz. by an humble application to him, to whom *alone* they are known, to make them known to us. And

this, by the free and near access which his holy Spirit hath to our spirits, he can effectually do various ways, viz. by fixing our attention ; by quickening our apprehensions ; by removing our prejudices ; (which, like a false medium before the eye of the mind, prevents its seeing things in a just and proper light ;) by mortifying our pride ; strengthening the intellectual and reflecting faculties ; and enforcing upon the mind a lively sense and knowledge of its greatest happiness and duty, and so awakening the soul from that carnal security and indifference about its best interests, into which too much attention to the world is apt to betray it.

Besides, prayer is a very proper expedient for attaining *self-knowledge*, as the actual engagement of the mind in this devotional exercise is in itself a great help to it. For the mind is never in a better frame, than when it is intently and devoutly engaged in this duty. It has then the best apprehensions of God, the truest notions of itself, and the justest sentiments of earthly things ; the clearest conceptions of its own weakness, and the deepest sense of its own vileness ; and, consequently, is in the best disposition that can be, to receive a true and right knowledge of itself.

Could we but always think of ourselves in such a manner, or could we but always be in a disposition to think of ourselves in such a manner, as we sometimes do in the fervour of our humiliations before the throne of grace, how great progress should we soon make in this important science ? Which evidently shows the necessity of such devout and humble engagements of the soul, and how happy a means they are to attain a just *self-acquaintance*.

It is certain, that the mind cannot be more nobly or usefully employed than in such kind of contemplations. Reasoning about the nature of things, and

quires, is of all other, the most excellent knowledge ; and that both in regard to its *object* and its *end*, the object of it being God, and the end of it, *eternal happiness*.

The great end of religion is to *make us like God*, and *conduct us to the enjoyment of him*. And whatever has not this plain tendency, and especially if it has the contrary, men may call it *religion*, (if they please,) but they cannot call it more out of its name. And whatever is called religious knowledge, if it does not direct us in the way to this end, is not religious knowledge ; but something else *falsely so called*. And some are unhappily accustomed to such an abuse of words and understanding, as not only to call, but to *think* those things *religion*, which are the very reverse ; and those notions, *religious knowledge*, which lead them the farthest from it.

The sincerity of a truly religious principle cannot be better known, than by the readiness with which the thoughts advert to God, and the pleasure with which they are employed in devout exercises. And though a person may not always be so well pleased with hearing religious things talked of by others, whose different taste, sentiments, or manner of expression may have something disagreeable ; yet if he have no inclination to think of them himself, or converse with himself about them, he hath great reason to suspect that his *heart is not right with God*. But if he frequently and delightfully exercise his mind in divine contemplations, it will not only be a good mark of his sincerity, but will habitually dispose it for the reception of the best and most useful thoughts, and fit it for the noblest entertainments.

And now, reader, whoever thou art that hast taken the pains to peruse these pages, whatever be thy circumstances or condition in the world, what-

ever thy capacity or understanding, whatever thy occupations and engagements, whatever thy favourite sentiments and principles, or whatever religious sect or party thou espoucest, know for certain, that thou hast been deeply interested in what thou hast been reading, whether thou hast attended to it or not. For it is of no less concern to thee than the security of thy peace and usefulness in this world, and thy happiness in another; and relates to all thy interests both as a man and a christian.

THE END.

A

SERIOUS AND EARNEST

EXPOSTULATION.

—♦—
No. 25.
—♦—

New-York:

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1825.*

A Serious and Earnest Expostulation.



ALTHOUGH the goodness of God, and his rich mercies in Christ Jesus, are a sufficient assurance to us, that he will be merciful to our weaknesses and infirmities ; (that is, to such failings as are the effects of ignorance or surprise,) yet we have no reason to expect the same mercy towards those sins which we have lived in, through a want of intention to avoid them.

It is sometimes said, that all people fall short of the perfection of the Gospel, and that therefore we may be content with our failings. But this is saying nothing to the purpose : for the question is not, whether Gospel perfection can be fully attained ; but, whether we come as near to it as a sincere intention and careful diligence can carry us ; whether we are not in a much lower state, than we should be in, if we sincerely intended, and carefully laboured, to advance ourselves in all the Christian virtues.

If we are as forward in the Christian life, as our best endeavours can make us ; then we may confidently hope, that our imperfections will not be laid to our charge. But if our defects in piety, humility, and charity, are owing to our negligence, and the want of a sincere intention to be as eminent in these virtues as we can ; then we leave ourselves as much without excuse, as he that lives in any sin through the want of a sincere intention to depart from it.

The salvation of our souls is set forth in Scripture, as a work that requires all our diligence, as a work that is to be wrought out with fear and trembling. We are told, that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"—that, "many are called, but few chosen;"—and that many will miss of their salvation, who seem to have taken some pains to obtain it: as in these words: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Here our blessed Lord commands us to *strive* to enter in, because many will fail who only *seek* to enter. By which we are plainly taught, that Religion is a state of labour and striving; and that many will fail of their salvation, not because they took no pains or care about it, but because they did not take pains and care enough;—they only *sought* but did not *strive* to enter in.

Every Christian, therefore, should as well examine his life by these doctrines, as by the commandments. For these doctrines are as plain marks of our condition, as the commandments are of our duty. For, if salvation is only given to those who strive for it, then it is as reasonable for me to consider, whether my course of life be a course of striving to obtain it, as to consider whether I am keeping any of the commandments.

If my Religion is only a formal compliance with those modes of worship that are in fashion where I live; if it costs me no pains or trouble; if it lays me under no rules and restraints; if I have no careful thoughts and sober reflections about it: is it not great weakness, to think that I am *striving to enter in at the strait gate*?

If I am seeking every thing that can delight my senses and regale my appetites; if I am spending

my time and fortune in pleasures, diversions, and worldly enjoyments, if I am a stranger to watching and prayer : how can it be said, that I am *working out my salvation with fear and trembling ?*

If there is nothing in my life and conversation, that shows me to be different from heathens ; if I use the world and worldly enjoyments, as the generality of people now do, and in all ages have done : why should I think that I am of the number of those who are *walking in the narrow way to heaven !*

And yet, if the way is narrow, if none can walk in it but those that strive, is it not as necessary for me to consider, whether the way I am in be narrow enough, or whether the labour I take be a sufficient striving, as to consider, whether I duly observe the second or the third commandment ?

The sum of the matter is this : from the above-mentioned, and many other passages of scripture, it seems plain that our salvation depends upon the sincerity and the perfection of our endeavours to obtain it. Weak and imperfect men shall, notwithstanding their frailties and defects, be received as having pleased God, if they have done their utmost to please him. The rewards of charity, piety, and humility, will be given to those whose lives have been a careful labour to exercise these virtues in as high a degree as they could.

We cannot offer to God the service of angels ; but fallen men can do their best ; and this is the perfection that is required of us : it is the perfection of our best endeavours, a careful labour to be as perfect as we can. But, if we stop short of this, for aught we know, we stop short of the mercy of God, and leave ourselves nothing to plead from the terms of the Gospel. For God has there made no promises of mercy to the slothful and negligent. His mercy

is offered only to our best, though feeble, **endeavours** to practise all manner of righteousness.

The measure of our love to God, seems, in justice, to be the measure of our love of every virtue. We are to love and practise it, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our might. And when we cease to live with this regard to virtue, we live below the dignity of our nature ; and, instead of being able to plead our infirmities, we stand chargeable with negligence. It is for this reason, that we are exhorted, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling : because, unless our hearts are eagerly bent upon the work of our salvation ; unless holy fear animate our endeavours, and keep our consciences strict and tender about every part of our duty ; unless we are constantly examining how we live, and how fit we are to die ; we shall, in all probability fall into a state of negligence, and pursue such a course of life, as will never carry us to the rewards of heaven. And he that considers that a just God will only make such allowances as are suitable to his justice, that our works are all to be examined by fire, will find, that fear and trembling are proper tempers for those that are drawing near to so great a trial. And indeed there is no probability that any one should do all the duty that is expected from him, or make that progress in piety, which the holiness and justice of God requires of him, but he that is constantly afraid of falling short of it.

Now this is not intended to possess people's minds with a scrupulous anxiety, and discontent in the service of God, but to fill them with a just fear of living in sloth and idleness, and in the neglect of such virtues as they will want at the day of judgment. It is to excite them to an earnest examination of their lives, to such zeal, and care, and concern after Chris-

tian perfection, as they use in any matter that has gained their heart and affections. It is only a desiring of them to be so apprehensive of their state, so humble in their opinion of themselves, so earnest after higher degrees of piety, and so fearful of falling short of happiness, as the great Apostle was, when he wrote thus to the Philippians : “ *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:—but this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*” And then he adds, “ *let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.*”

“If the Apostle thought it necessary for those who were in his state of perfection, *to be thus minded*; that is, thus labouring, professing, and aspiring after some degrees of holiness, to which they had not then arrived: surely it is necessary for us, who are labouring under great imperfections, *to be thus minded*; that is, thus earnest and striving after such degrees of a holy and divine life as we have not yet attained.

“The best way for any one to know how much he ought to aspire after holiness, is, to consider not how much will make his present life easy, but how much will make him easy at the hour of death. Now any man that dares be so serious as to enter upon this consideration, will perceive, that, at death, every one will wish, that he had been as perfect as human nature can be. Is not this, therefore, sufficient to put us not only upon wishing for, but upon labouring after all that perfection of which we shall then feel the need? Is it excessive folly to be discontent with such a course of piety, as, we already know, cannot content us, at a time when we shall so want it, as to have nothing else to comfort us? How

can we carry a severer condemnation against ourselves, than to believe, that, at the hour of death, we shall want the virtues of the saints, and wish that we had been amongst the first servants of God, and yet take no methods of arriving at their height of piety whilst we live? Though this is an absurdity that we can easily pass over at present, whilst the health of our bodies, the passions of our minds, the noise, and hurry, and pleasures, and business of the world, lead us on, with eyes that see not, and ears that hear not; yet, at death it will set itself before us in a dreadful magnitude, and our consciences will never let us take our eyes from it.

Penitens was a busy, notable tradesman, and very prosperous in his dealings; but died in the thirty-fifth year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, some of his neighbours came one evening to see him; at that time he spoke thus to them:

“ I see, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances; and I know the thoughts you now have about me. You think how melancholy a case it is, to see so young a man, and in such flourishing business, delivered up to death. And, perhaps, had I visited any of you in my condition, I should have had the same thoughts of you. But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts, than my condition is like yours. It is no trouble to me, to think that I am to die young, or before I have raised an estate. These things are now sunk into such mere nothings, that I have no name little enough to call them by. For, if in a few days, or hours, I am to leave this carcass to be buried in the earth, and to find myself either for ever happy in the favour of God, or eternally separated from all

light and peace, can any words sufficiently express the littleness of every thing else? Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuses us with the neglect and disregard of these things? Is there any folly like the folly of one manly state, which is too wise and busy to be at leisure for these reflections?

"When we consider death as a misery, we only think of it as a miserable separation from the enjoyments of this life. We seldom mourn over an old man that dies rich; but we lament the young, that are taken away in the progress of their fortune. You yourselves look upon me with pity, not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a prosperous trade in the flower of my life.

"This is the wisdom of our manly thoughts. And yet, what folly of the silliest children is so great as this? For what is there miserable or dreadful in death, but the consequences of it? When a man is dead, what does any thing signify to him, but the state he is then in?

"Our poor friend *Lepidus* died, as he was dressing himself for a feast. Do you think it is now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? Feasts, and business, and pleasures, and enjoyments, seem great things to us, whilst we think of nothing else; but as soon as we add death to them, they all sink into an equal littleness: and the soul that is separated from the body, no more laments the loss of business, than the losing of a feast.

"If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve, that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go to heaven, before I had made a few more bargains, or stood a little longer behind a

counter? And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content, that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches?

"The greatness of those things which follow death, makes all that goes before it sink into nothing. Now, that judgment is the next thing that I look for, and everlasting happiness or misery has come so near me; all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem as vain and insignificant, and to have as little to do with my happiness, as the clothes that I wore before I could speak.

"But, my friends, how am I surprised, that I have not always had these thoughts. For what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the necessities of piety, but what I might have as easily and fully seen in any part of my life? What a strange thing it is, that a little health, or the poor business of a shop should keep us so senseless of these great things, that are coming so fast upon us!

"Just as you came into my chamber, I was thinking with myself, what numbers of souls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time, surprised with a summons to the other world; some taken from their shops and farms, others from their sports and pleasures, some at suits of law, others at gaming tables; some on the road, others at their firesides, and all seized at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frightened at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, designs, and projects, astonished at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort: their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with the deepest convictions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry Judge. the

worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death.

"Oh! my friends! bless God, that you are not of this number, that you have time and strength to employ yourselves in such works of piety, as may bring you peace at last. And take this along with you, that there is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these apprehensions. Had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present unto God one year of such devotion and good works, as I never before so much as intended. You, perhaps, when you consider that I have lived free from scandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the Church, wonder to see me so full of remorse and self-condemnation at the approach of death. But, alas! what a poor thing it is, to have lived only free from murder, theft, and adultery!

"You know, indeed, that I have never been reckoned a sot; but you are at the same time witnesses, and have been frequent companions of my intemperance, sensuality, and great indulgence. And if I am now going to a judgment, where nothing will be rewarded but good works, I may well be concerned, that though I am not a sot, yet I have no Christian sobriety to plead for me.

"It is true, I have lived in the communion of the Church, and generally frequented its worship and service, when I was not too idle, or otherwise disposed of by my business or pleasures. But then, my conformity to the public worship has been rather a thing of course, than any real intention of performing the duty which that service supposes; had it not been so, I should have been more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it.

But the thing that now surprises me above all

onders, is this, that I never had so much as a general intention of living up to the piety of the Gospel. This never so much as entered into my head or my heart. I never considered, whether I was living as the laws of religion direct, or whether my way of life was such as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour.

"And can it be thought, that I have kept the Gospel terms of salvation, without ever so much as intending, in any serious and deliberate manner, either to know or to keep them? Can it be thought that I have pleased God, with such a life as he requires, though I have lived without ever considering what he requires, or how much I have performed? How easy a thing would salvation be, if it could fall into my careless hands, who have never had so much serious thought about it, as about any one common bargain that I have made!

"In the business of life, I have used prudence and reflection; I have done every thing by rule and method. I have been glad to converse with men of experience and judgment, to find out the reasons why some fail, and others succeed in business. I have taken no step in trade, but with great care and caution, considering every advantage or danger that attended it. I have always had my eye upon the main end of business, and have studied all the ways and means of being a gainer by all that I undertook.

"But what is the reason that I have brought none of these tempers to religion? What is the reason, that I, who have so often talked of the necessity of rules, and methods, and diligence, in worldly business, have all this while never once thought of any rules, or methods, or managements, to carry me on in a life of piety?

"Do you think any thing can astonish and con-

found a dying man like this? What pain do you think a man must feel, when his conscience lays all this folly to his charge? when it shall show him how regular, exact, and wise, he has been in small matters, that are passed away like a dream, and how stupid and senseless he has lived, without any reflection, without any rules, in things of such moment as no heart can conceive!

“ Had I only my frailties and imperfections to lament at this time, I should lie here, humbly trusting in the mercies of God. But alas! how can I call a general disregard, and a thorough neglect of all religious improvement, a frailty or imperfection; when it was as much in my power to be exact, and careful, and diligent, in a course of piety, as in the business of my trade! I could have called in as many helps, have practised as many rules, and been taught as many certain methods of holy living, as of thriving in my shop, had I but so intended and desired it.

“ Oh! my friends! a careless life, unconcerned, and inattentive to the duties of religion, is so destitute of all excuse, so unworthy of the mercy of God, so disgraceful to the sense and reason of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater punishment, than for a man to be thrown into the state that I am in, to reflect upon it.”

Penitens was unable to proceed, and, shortly after, expired.

THE END.

ON THE
ADVANTAGES OF THE CROSS,
AND OF AN
HUMBLE RESIGNATION
TO THE
DIVINE WILL.



any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his daily, and follow me." LUKE ix, 23.

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1824.

● 世界貿易の中心地としての地位

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ON THE

ADVANTAGES OF THE CROSS, &c.



WE find it difficult to be convinced of the mercy of God in loading those he loves with crosses. Why, say they, should he delight in our sufferings? Cannot he make us good without making us miserable? Yes, without doubt, God could do so; for nothing is impossible to Him. He holds in His almighty hand, the hearts of the children of men, and turns them as He pleases. But God, who has power to save us without the cross, has not willed it so: in like manner as He has willed that men should arrive at maturity by degrees, and first pass through all the distresses and weaknesses of childhood, rather than be born in the full strength of riper years. In this He is the master; our part is to be silent, and adore His profound wisdom, although we do not comprehend it. Thus much we clearly see, that we cannot become truly good, but in proportion as we become humble, and detached from self, so as to render all to God.

The operation of grace which detaches us from ourselves, and takes away self-love, must, without a miracle of grace, be painful. God does not in the operations of grace, any more than in those of nature, daily work miracles.

It would be as great a miracle in grace to see a person full of himself, become in a moment dead to all self-interest, as to see the child that went to bed last night, rise this morning as tall and strong as a man of thirty. God conceals his

operations in the course of grace, as well as of nature, under in insensible succession of events, and by this means keeps us in the obscurity of faith. He not only accomplishes his work by degrees, but by means the most simple and suitable for its success; that, the means appearing suitable to the end, human wisdom may attribute the success to second causes, and so the finger of God be less observed; otherwise, all that God effects, would be evidently a perpetual miracle, which would destroy that faith in which he would have us to live.

It is to preserve us in this obscurity of faith, with regard to the operation of grace, that God renders it tedious and painful. He makes use of the inconstancy and ingratitude of the creatures, and of the disgusts and the disappointments we experience in prosperity, to detach us from ourselves, and that deceitful prosperity. He prevents our being proud of ourselves, by the experience of our weakness and corruption, which are manifest by our numberless relapses.

We desire to be suddenly consumed by the flames of pure love; but this would cost us scarcely any thing; it is the excess of our self-love, that makes us desirous to become thus perfect in a moment, and at so cheap a rate.

Of what then can we complain? Our evil is that we are all attached to the creatures, and still more to ourselves. God prepares a succession of events, which by degrees draw us from the creatures, and in the end from ourselves. This operation is painful; but it is our corruption, which renders it necessary, and occasions all the pain that we suffer.

He deprives us of things we love, that we may love them with a pure, solid, and temperate love; and that He may secure to us the everlasting enjoyment of them in his bosom, so as to do us a hundred fold more good, than we ourselves know how to desire in them.

In the creation of the universe. His wisdom measured and

duces and renews the breath of life which animates us ; it is He, that numbers our days, and holds in His omnipotent hands the key of the grave, to open or to shut it.

What strikes us most, is as nothing in the sight of God ; a little more or a little less of life, is a difference which disappears in the presence of His eternity. Of what importance is it, whether this weak vessel, this body of clay, should be reduced to ashes a little sooner, or a little later ?

O how contracted are our views of things ! We are alarmed to see a person die in the flower of his youth. We cry out, What a loss is this ! But to whom is the loss ? What does he lose that dies ? A few years of vanity and illusion, to be spent in danger of eternal death. God takes him away from amidst of his iniquities, and hastens to snatch him from this corrupted world, and his own weakness. What do they lose who most loved Him ? They lose the poison of a worldly felicity ; they lose the forgetfulness of God and themselves into which they were plunged ; or rather, they gain, by the efficacy of the cross, the blessedness which comes from detachment. The same stroke that saves him who dies, prepares others (whom their sorrows detach from themselves) courageously to work out their salvation.

What difference is there now between two persons who lived a hundred years ago ? One of them survived the other twenty years ; but now they are both dead. Their separation, which at that time appeared so long, does not appear so to us, and was in truth but a short separation. Some regard themselves as if they were immortal, or at least as if they had many years before them. O the folly of human wisdom ! Those we see dying every day, follow close upon those who are already dead. The man who this day sets out on a journey, would not think himself at a great distance from him who set off but two days before him. Life glides away like a torrent. The past is but a dream ; the present, when

we think we enjoy it, flies from us, and sinks into the abyss of the past; the future will be of the same nature, and will as rapidly pass by us. The days, the months, the years, like the waves of the sea, flow one after another: yet a little while, a very little while, and all shall be ended.

It is true we suffer, but then it is by the will of God, in order to purify us, and render us worthy of Him. The world smiled upon us, and this prosperity poisoned our hearts. Would we spend all our days, even to the moment of our death, in that softness, that delicacy, that vain joy, that splendor, that triumph of pride, that relish for the world, which is at enmity with Jesus Christ; and at a distance from the cross, which alone ought to sanctify us?

The world will frown upon us; it will ungratefully forget us; and cease to acknowledge us: it will consider us as in the class of those things which no longer exist. Well, and are we to be surprised that the world continues to be like itself, unjust, deceitful, and perfidious? Yet it is this world, we are not ashamed to love. It is from this world that God would draw us, to deliver us from its slavery, that we may enter into the liberty of detached souls.

O Thou who seest the foundation of our misery, it is Thou alone that canst heal it. Haste then to bestow on us faith, hope, love, and that Christian fortitude which we want. Grant that we may incessantly look up to Thee, O Father Almighty, who givest nothing to Thy children but what is conducive to their salvation.

Lift up my heart, O my God! Give me one that will fear only to displease Thee, Thou seest the weakness of Thy creature, who has no resource in himself; every thing fails him; and so much the better, provided Thou dost not fail him, and that he seeks in Thee all that he despairs to find in his own heart.

All that is painful in our way to God, are crosses, which

us to Him, if we endure them humbly. The things that confound and overwhelm our pride, will do us still more good, than such as animate our virtue. We have need to be cast down, like Paul at the gates of Damascus, and to be deprived of all resource but in God alone.

Nature only inspires a haughty and disdainful courage, and is provoked at those things that God makes use of, in order to humble us. We must bear His crosses in silence, with an humble, peaceful courage; being strong in God, but not in ourselves; great through the sweetness of patience, and little through humility.

When God, in the humiliations He sends, wounds us even to the quick, so much the better; it is the merciful Physician that applies a remedy to those disorders he has a mind to heal: let us be silent, and adore the Hand that strikes us: let us not open our mouths, but to say, "I have well deserved it." Be the cup ever so bitter, we must drink it even to the dregs, as did Jesus Christ. He died even for his murderers, and has taught us to love, bless and pray for those who are the cause of our sufferings.

In the seasons of adversity and temptation, we ought to be doubly earnest in our prayers. We shall find in the heart of Jesus dying on the cross, all that we want in our own hearts, to engage us to love those whom our pride prompts us to hate.

When we love the cross, it is but half a cross, because love softens every thing; and we suffer much, because we love little. Happy is he who suffers much, and wretched is he who suffers not with Jesus Christ: for we are come into this world to be made perfect through sufferings.

God tries us by sickness, and by outward subjections, all which we must turn to our advantage. All our crosses are necessary for us. When we suffer much, it is because we have many attachments that should be cut off.

Crosses are our daily bread: our soul has occasion for a

certain portion every day, in order to detach it from itself, as the body stands in need of a certain quantity of food to nourish it. We stand in need of crosses, and should be destitute of all good were not God careful to turn the life of this world into bitterness, in order to detach us from it.

The cross is never without its fruit, when we receive it in the spirit of sacrifice. We must accept it, adoring the Hand that lays it on us only for our sanctification. Blessed is he who is always ready, and never says, it is too much; who depends not on himself, but on the Almighty; who desires no more consolation than God is willing to give him; and whose nourishment is His pure will.

There are in crosses so many marks of mercy, that if nature is afflicted, faith ought to rejoice. It is in the cross that we find peace, by submission and the sacrifice of our pleasures. Thus far does God urge the soul to bring it from all that is not himself. What then is to be done, but to embrace the present cross, and suffer ourselves to be crucified? When He has thoroughly crucified, He comforts us; but does not, as the creatures do, give us poisonous comforts to nourish the venom of self-love. His comforts are pure and solid.

The peace that is experienced in submission, without any outward alleviation, is a great gift: by this, God accustoms us to be exercised without being dejected. Though our too slothful nature should be cast down, our heart remains firm; it is a peace so much the purer.

The consideration of the right of God over us his creatures, and that of our own wretchedness, which deserves nothing but humiliations and crosses, is the bread that ought to nourish us in all trials. Let us suffer God to act; men can avail nothing: sometimes, when all seems to be lost, all is in reality saved. God is pleased to cast us down, and raise us up again by His hand alone.

The crosses which are sent by God, and under which He would have us bend, will not in themselves suppress our pride : it is only by a renunciation of our spirit in silence before Him, that we shall become humble and softened through His grace.

The crosses of an anxious solicitude, with regard to futurity, are not according to the will of God : we have no unction to support us in them ; nor shall we suffer them but thro' an infidelity which alienates us from grace ; so that they are always bitter ; all is darkness, nor is there any resource ; and the soul that would, through curiosity, taste this forbidden fruit, finds in it nothing but death and rebellion, without consolation. This is the effect of not trusting God, and of daring to penetrate into those secrets of which He is jealous.

Let us then shut our eyes with regard to all that God conceals from us, and that he keeps in store in the treasures of His wisdom : let us adore without seeing : let us be silent : let us continue in peace. The crosses of the present moment always bring with them proportionable grace, and consequently their mitigation : we then see the hand of God which manifests itself in them.

Jesus Christ says, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matt. vi. 34. The evil of each day is converted into good, when we suffer God to act. What are we that we should say to Him, 'For what reason doest thou this ?' He is the Lord, and that is sufficient. "It is the Lord : let Him do what seemeth Him good." 1 Sam. iii. 18. Whether He raises us up or casts us down ; whether He strikes or comforts us ; whether He bruises us, or heals our wounds ; whether He gives us life or death, He is always the Lord, we are but His workmanship. What does it signify, so He is glorified, and His will accomplished in us ?

Let us come out of ourselves ; let us no longer love ourselves with a disorderly love, and the will of God, which will

n all things unfold itself, will also comfort us in whatever He brings to pass around us, or in us.

When our heavenly Father tries us here below, with a variety of temptations, both inward and outward, let us rejoice; for it is by such afflictions, that our faith, more precious than gold, is purified. Let us rejoice, that we thus prove the delusion and emptiness of all that is not God; for it is by this experience, that we are drawn from ourselves and the desires of the world. What! shall we be discouraged when it is the hand of God that hastens to perform His work? This we every day wish that He may do, and yet when He begins to do it, we are troubled; our sloth and impurities resist the hand of God.

Whilst we remain shut up in ourselves, we are exposed to the contradictions of men; our passions clash with those of our neighbours; the sensibility of our passions, and the jealousy of our pride, render us open to attacks from all sides; there is no peace or hope in ourselves, while we are at the mercy of a troop of covetous and insatiable desires, and while we know not how to content this *me*, that is so jealous, so delicate, and so suspicious of every thing that touches it.

Hence it comes to pass, that in our intercourse with our neighbour, we are like a sick man who has languished a long time in bed: there is no part of the body but what is sore to the touch: diseased self love is so softened by itself it cannot bear to be touched, without crying out. To this delicacy, add the rudeness of a neighbour, so full of imperfections, that he does even know them himself, and likewise the reproaches of that neighbour against our imperfections, which are as great as his. Thus do the sons of Adam punish each other: behold in all nations, all towns, all communities, families, and even between friends, the martyrdom of self-love!

The remedy by which peace is to be found, is, to come out of self. We must renounce it and sacrifice all self-in-

to fear, or to be solicitous about. It is then we taste the true peace reserved for *men of a good will*; that is to say, for such as have no other will than that of God, which becomes theirs. Then men can do no more to us; for they cannot lay hold of us either by our desires or fears. In this state, we place our treasure so high, that no hand can reach to deprive us of it. They mangle our reputation, but we submit to it; for we know how good it is to be humbled when God humbles us. We are disappointed in friendship; so much the better; He is the only true friend, who is jealous of all others, and who detaches us from them, to render our attachments more pure. We are harrassed, constrained, and reduced to submission, but it is God that does it, and that is sufficient: we love the Hand that bruises us, and we find peace in all these troubles, blessed peace that attends us even to the cross!

The more perfect our resignation, the greater will be our peace: if there still remain some attachments, and some desires, our peace is imperfect: when all cords are broken, then there is liberty. Let disgrace, pain and death, fall upon me, while I hear Jesus Christ, who says to me, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Luke xii. 4.

O how weak are they, even when they deprive us of life! Very contracted is that power which can only break an earthen vessel; that can only kill what of itself dies daily: they can hasten a little that death, which is in fact a deliverance; after which we escape out of their hands into the bosom of God, where all is permanent peace.

We are in this world to suffer; woe unto those that have their consolation in this world! They will not find it in the next. This life is the season of trials, to correct, purify, and wean us: when we have no more to suffer, we shall no longer have occasion to live: as a patient, when cured is discharged from an hospital: it is by suffering that our cure is effected.

We must never think of those who disquiet us, but in order to forgive them: we must regard God in them, who makes use of them to exercise our humility, our patience, and our love of the cross. We shall hereafter see how useful they have been to us who have crucified us, by nailing us to the cross with Jesus Christ. The pains they cause will soon pass away, but the fruit resulting from them will be everlasting.

Let us then, with humble confidence, bear the temptations that spring from our own hearts, as well as the storms we have to encounter from without us. Let us be faithful by giving ourselves up to God; and in every tempest, resign our cause to Him, who means to show us the shipwrecks to which we should be exposed, did not His almighty hand preserve us.

THE END.

THE

SICK MAN'S FRIEND.

"The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou, [O Lord,] wilt make all his bed in his sickness." *Psaln* xli. 3.

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THE SICK MAN'S FRIEND.



AMONG the various troubles and sorrows which are permitted to befall us in this mortal life, there is none more frequent, or more trying, than sickness. When it is long and painful, we are too apt to complain, and call it a misery and a heavy affliction: but, my brethren, it *comes from God*—and it must therefore be for our benefit, if we make a proper use of it. It is a means intended by Him to bring us to glory and happiness; and shall we refuse to bow down before him, and thankfully receive whatever he sees needful for so blessed a purpose? We know, from his own gracious words, that “He doth not willingly grieve, nor afflict the children of men;” therefore he does it in mercy; and we must pray him to strengthen our weak minds, and enable us not only to bear it with patience, but with thankfulness.

When we are in health, and the world goes well with us, are we not apt to forget the Giver of all good things, and to live as if this were our abiding place, and as if we looked for no other home, no better country? To a man in such a case, to one leading a careless or a worldly life, would it not be gracious and merciful in God, to send a fit of sickness, which would force him to consider his ways, and inquire into the state of his soul? and ought he not from his heart to thank the merciful Being, who wakes him from such a dream of childish folly, to a sense of his real condition?

O reader, whoever thou art, waste not the time and means given for the glorious purpose of attaining eternal blessedness, in a foolish pursuit after the enjoyments of life, which a few years must take from thee, and which may be called for in a single hour! Should some sudden accident, or violent illness cause thy death in such a state, what would thy prospect be?—What preparation can such a life have made for the awful day of account, when every one will be rewarded according to his works? How can thou answer, when called upon by the righteous Judge to say what use thou hast made of the various opportunities of doing good?

die, thus unprepared for the awful account which must follow ; how will he who has led a profligate and sinful life, who has many crimes to answer for, appear before Him "whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity ?" With what fearful remorse and horror will such a one look back upon his past days, knowing that they are gone for ever ! That the precious time which was granted unto him to "work out his salvation," is come to an end ; and that he must be judged by what is past !

No scene which the eye can look upon, is so dreadful as the death-bed of a wicked man. Yet let us not fly from a fellow-creature who is so miserable : while his breath remains, let us show him kindness, and, as far as we are able, ease his bodily pains.

Should the Almighty raise him from the fearful state in which he lay, and bless the endeavours of his family and neighbours to prolong his life—what joy, what thankfulness, should fill his heart ! Yet let him rejoice with trembling, lest returning health should bring back his old desires and inclinations.—Greatly would he want a true christian friend, who might address him thus :—

"Keep constantly in mind, all that thou felt when thou believed thyself to be upon thy death-bed. What worlds thou would have given, that thou had "remembered thy Creator in the days of thy youth," and served him while thy strength remained. How thou dreaded the awful punishment of thy sins ; how earnestly thou prayed for a year, a month, a week of lengthened life, to prove by the warmth of thy piety, and the strictness of thy obedience, that thy repentance was sincere.

"Be thankful then—be truly thankful, that these thy fervent prayers have been heard, and granted.—God has raised thee up ; and it is now thy part, to strive with all the powers which he has thus a second time bestowed upon thee, to make his gracious bounty a real blessing.

"Begin with offering the tribute of a grateful heart, to Him who has thus given thee a new life, and whether it be long or short, devote it all to him, by making it thy daily study to learn and obey his holy commandments. But, before we consider what he chiefly requires from thee, I will in a few words tell thee what thou must carefully and resolutely avoid : for, "ceasing to do evil," is the first and most necessary step towards "learning to do well."

"The Almighty gave a solemn command by the prophet Moses, that no man should take his sacred name in vain : and our Saviour Jesus Christ never spoke more plainly than when he said, "Swear not at all." It is again repeated by the apostle James, "Above all things, my brethren, swear not !" Yet there is a vice too common among those who call themselves worshippers of God, and disciples of his beloved Son, that of profane cursing and swearing ; a practice so shameful and degrading, that one would think that none but the lowest and most depraved of the human race, could be guilty of it ; and to which no man can say, that he is tempted, either by profit or pleasure. Can it then be needful for me to warn thee against thus wantonly insulting that High and Holy One, who has so lately delivered thee from the greatest danger to which a human creature can be exposed, that of dying in a sinful state ? But, as "the heart of man is deceitful," and old habits are ever ready to steal back upon us in unguarded moments,—I do solemnly warn thee to check the forbidden words, as they rise to thy lips : and, in guarding against the return of this sin, it is necessary that thou get the better of another, by never giving way to anger. Remember the patient endurance of our blessed Lord, when treated with the most cruel insult and barbarity ; and do thou in like manner bear with the provocations given thee by thy fellow-creatures, remembering the condition upon which we are taught to pray for the pardon of our own sins, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

"Why has thy merciful Creator raised thee from the bed of sickness, but to give thee one more opportunity to save thy soul ? And will thou render this wonderful kindness on his part of no effect, and heap up the measure of thy iniquity by base ingratitude ? No, we will hope better things.—As "a good soldier of Jesus Christ," make war against every evil habit and inclination : never stop or rest, till through him, God has given thee a glorious victory : and this, be assured, he will not fail to do, if thou thyself art not wanting in that immoveable steadiness, which is so necessary in the Christian warfare, that without it no one can "fight the good fight of faith, or lay hold on eternal life."

"Another most destructive habit is that of idleness.

has been one of the sins of thy past life, pray to God, that he will strengthen thy resolutions, never again to be guilty of it. Do not suppose that thou may now and then indulge thyself with a little more than is needful, without again falling into excess : this is a habit which must be entirely subdued—if subdued at all. If thou art a true penitent, (and no other can find forgiveness at the throne of grace,) thou wilt dread the least approach towards a habit which has in time past been so destructive to thee, and resolve, never again to enter those places where thou art in the most danger of being led into it, as well as to renounce, as far as thou art able, all society with those who continue the practice.”

A true Christian friend would not stop here, in his advice and instructions to the recovering man. Swearing and drunkenness are great sins, and to give way habitually to anger, hatred, or malice, will shut a man out of the heavenly kingdom ; but there are other vices equally fatal, and if he suspects him to have been guilty of these, he will thus give him solemn warning of their consequences :—

“ If in thy former life, thou hast practised any manner of dishonesty, beware ! As thou valuest thy soul, beware of the smallest shadow of a return to it again.—Take not a penny, nor a penny’s worth, that is not strictly thy own, and if thou art in the employ of another, do his work well and diligently. Remember that the eye of a just and holy God is upon thee every moment, and that he will reward or punish thee in a future world, as thy deeds have been good or evil, in this thy state of discipline and trial.”

“ Would thou forfeit the glorious hopes of happiness in heaven ? Would thou shut thyself out from that blessed place, for the paltry gains of cheating and overreaching in this short life ?—gains which the pangs of an evil conscience will never suffer thee to enjoy ? Remember, O remember the state from which thou hast been so lately raised ; when thy soul shook within thee at the prospect of unprepared death ! Never let an other such hour of terror seize upon thy trembling heart ; but, by a life of strict honesty and true holiness, make thy peace with God—resolving rather to feed upon a crust, and quench thy thirst with water from the running stream, than load thy soul with the guilt and misery of an other sin.

“ To a life of righteousness the best prospect of happiness is given even in this world, and in general we should re-

olve to do all that our duty requires, if we rightly understand our present comfort and advantage. If thou art diligent, sober, and strictly honest, the change in thy character will soon be found out; thou will gain valuable friends, and thy family will love and cherish thee. But, what is a thousand times more than all this, God will freely pardon thy past offences. His blessing will dwell with thee, and thou will every day find more ease and comfort in thy own mind, more love of Him, more faith in his promises of forgiveness to the truly penitent; more delight in what is good, and more hatred and dread of evil, till by degrees thou art "born again"—and in the true gospel sense, become "a new creature;" for so must every wicked man be changed, before he can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Be not afraid or ashamed to tell thy old companions, that thou art an altered man, and fully resolved to lead a new life; and if they will hearken to thee, exhort them to do the same. Tell them what thou felt, when death seemed ready to carry thee unprepared before the judgment-seat of Christ; of God's tender mercy in raising thee from the border of the grave, and, by prolonging thy life, giving thee an opportunity to amend thy ways, and obtain his gracious pardon of thy past offences."

"Who can tell whether He may not give a blessing to these thy charitable endeavours—who can say that thou may not be the means employed by him to save a fellow-creature. If but *one* will hearken—if thou can prevail upon *one* to forsake his sins, and live "soberly, righteously and godly," during the remainder of his abode in this world,—thou will have done a blessed and glorious work; a work in which thou will have reason to rejoice, through time, and eternity."

"But to give thyself a chance for this, thy own conduct must in all respects be a fit example for those whom thou shall exhort and advise. They must see in thee how good and lovely a truly christian life is, before thou can hope to persuade them to the practice of it. O let the hope of saving thy fellow-creatures, doubly incite thee to be "perfect in every good work," remembering, that, "he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

But it is not to the will of the Lord, that thou shouldst be a

best of us have much to repent of, and much to amend. In the days of health and ease, we are always in danger of setting our hearts too much upon the present life; upon the business, or the pleasures of it. But neither of these will forward us a single step on our way to heaven. If we could gain the whole world, and all the stock of false pleasures which it can boast, what at last would it avail us, when we might still lose our own souls. Like him in the parable, we may heap together a load of treasure; we may pull down our barns, and build greater; and say within ourselves, "We have good things laid up for the enjoyment of many years!" forgetting that in *one night* our souls may be required from us!

To a man in such a state, though the world sees him prosperous, and calls him happy, and though he is well satisfied with his own condition, a fit of sickness may be a real blessing; indeed it must be so, if he suffer it to have its proper and natural effect, of turning his thoughts inward, to examine what has been the real character of his past life, and what are the present dispositions of his mind. If he has been a careless follower after pleasure, or anxiously striving for wealth or power, how is it possible that the state of his heart and affections can be such as will fit him for the glorious society of heaven? for being admitted into the more immediate presence of the Almighty, and dwelling in the light of his countenance? The happy feelings which such hopes inspire, can only belong to the truly pious man, when the hour of his death approaches; the days of whose youth and health were a constant preparation for them. When he was "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame;" when "the blessing of him who was ready to perish came upon him," and he "caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Then was he securing to himself, through the infinite mercy of God, a peaceful death, and a joyful resurrection. Then was he pouring oil into that lamp which must light him to the *marriage feast*, and putting on the *wedding garment*, "clean and white," which is "the righteousness of saints."

But the child of this world, the lover of gain, the lover of vanity, the lover of pleasure, can have no such delightful hopes: he has busied himself in a vain pursuit of what he believed would be advantageous to him, during the continuance of this short life, while he leaves to chance, or rather leaves undone, and almost unthought of, the chief concern of his being; he

has been eager and anxious to provide for the welfare of a few uncertain days, while no preparation is made for the EVERLASTING AGES OF ETERNITY !

To awaken men from this state of stupid folly, does our merciful Father sometimes send sickness : and how most one of these misspenders of time despise himself, when he looks back upon his past life, and sees how little that is really good and worthy, has been done in the course of it ; how little use he has made of that blessed light, which, shining from heaven, was sent to guide his steps through a dark and dangerous world. When he feels the chastening hand of the Lord upon him, and looks for a speedy call to another world, how vain and empty will all those things appear, which he has hitherto been wishing and toiling for. Not one of them will then seem worthy of a moment's thought, for his whole soul will be filled with alarm and apprehension respecting that unseen state to which he is approaching.

Should a Christian friend visit one in this condition, (and to visit the sick, is one of the great duties of the Christian life,) would he not tenderly inquire of him respecting the state of his mind ? and, as one desirous to assist him in making such preparation as he might still have time to make, how fitly might he address him thus :—

“ My friend, I come not to mourn over thy sufferings, but to speak to thee of those things which will help thee to bear them patiently ; which will comfort and support thee when they are most severe, and enable thee when either pain or sorrow presses heavily to look meekly towards heaven, and say with pious Eli, ‘ It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.’ ”

“ When thy bodily sufferings are great, hearken to, and comfort thyself with, the exhortation of the apostle,—‘ My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : for whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.’ ”

“ Strive then to approve thyself a true convert to the doctrine and discipline of Christ, by showing much patience under affliction, so shall thy sufferings be sanctified unto thee, and this day be the commencement of a new and holy life.”

scarcely an hour, without considering whether his present pursuits—his thoughts, his words, and actions, are those which become the followers of such a Lord; whether the disposition and temper of his mind be pious, humble, kind, and fixed on heaven like his?—Thrice happy is the man who doth this; whether his station in the world be high or low, whether he prosper or be unfortunate, his life is sweetened by that most powerful of all cordials, *hope*!—and when his latest hours draw nigh, his heart rests securely on the mercy of his Almighty Father, while he looks with the bright eye of faith, to the glorious inheritance which is prepared for the saints!

“But the careless, the worldly-minded, cannot hope to die the death of the righteous;” as their lives have been widely different, so their ‘last end must be *unlike* his.’—Nothing but habits of holiness and virtue, nothing but the fear of God, and the keeping of the commandments, will be certain to bring a man peace at last.”

“Past time however cannot be recalled; past sins cannot be undone, and all that now remains for thee, is to humble thy soul before God, confessing and truly repenting of, all the wrong that thou hast done, and all the good that thou hast left undone; and resolving to spend every hour that he still bestows upon thee, as his thankful and obedient servant. Perhaps thy sickness may be prolonged; and thy sufferings may continue or increase; should it be so, make the most of the opportunity it gives thee, to practise that noble Christian virtue, perfect submission to the will of God.—Collect all the strength of thy mind, to endure patiently, remembering, that, ‘though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to them who are exercised thereby.’”

“‘Wherefore, lift up’ in thankfulness ‘the hands that hang down,’ and bend ‘the feeble knees,’ letting the calmness of thy mind, and thy kind and gentle behaviour to all who tend upon or visit thee, show that a real change is taking place in thy heart—an approach towards that ‘holiness without which no man can see the Lord.’”

“When a man believes himself to be near leaving the world, it costs him little to say, even with sincerity, that he hates his sins; for he can then have neither power nor inclination to commit the greater part of them. The time of trial



hast been most subject, and pray earnestly for help, in the necessary and difficult work of our all. When thou hast conquered an evil hast gained a victory, and hast reason both for thyself and thy fellow-creatures.

Will not my readers join with me in saying that sickness sometimes is a real blessing; that it is so, and is intended as such, by the all-wise and all-good God who sends it? "If ye endure chastening, God treats you as sons; for what son is he, whom the Father does not chasten?" But if you rise from such painful visitations; if, when you return to health you return to a life of folly, or worldly-mindedness, your condition, and could almost say that it is hopeless.

Think often, ye worldly-minded; think of the less ones, of that awful hour! and it will show you the value of the present life, and the glorious use made of it:—will convince you that it is not rather madness, to strive eagerly and anxiously for gains or the pleasures of a few short and unprofitable years, while no preparation is made for the ages to come.

But for you, who live in the actual commission of sin, who blaspheme your Maker, and utter curses

Do you, who lead sinful lives, hope in that awful hour to plead the merits of a Saviour, to avert the punishment which you feel that you have deserved? Will you say to Him on that day, "Lord, Lord, we were baptized in thy name, we have read thy holy gospel, we have called ourselves thy disciples and followers, and we depend upon thee to save us!" And will he not profess unto such unrighteous persons, "I never knew you: depart from me, all ye that work iniquity."

Let us now turn to a scene of a very different kind: to the sick room of a real Christian; one who not only in words acknowledges Christ for his Lord, but, by every action of his life, proves himself his sincere disciple; one, who is not only true and just, but kind and liberal in all his dealings; and is, as far as in him lies, the friend and helper of every one of his fellow-creatures. But, above all, one who has God in all his thoughts, loving him "with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength."

When such a man is visited with sickness, it produces in him neither terror nor amazement. He bows humbly down, under a Hand from which he well knows, nothing but good can ever come; and fervently prays that he may be so far enabled to imitate his beloved Master, as to bear meekly and patiently, whatever God is pleased to lay upon him. His mind is not troubled, for he has the heart-cheering testimony of a GOOD CONSCIENCE, which speaks peace to his soul by telling him, that "In simplicity, and godly sincerity, he has had his conversation in the world." He is more sensible of his past and present faults, than any other person can be, for he has constantly and diligently examined his own heart, to find, and root out every wrong inclination, that had place there. This was the great business of his life; and wherein he has failed, for every remaining error, he humbly entreats forgiveness from God, upon the gracious terms made known unto us in the gospel of his beloved Son.

In every interval of ease afforded to him, he comforts his mourning friends; bidding them not to "sorrow as those who have no hope;" nor heavily lament his loss; but trust in him who is a "Father to the fatherless; and the widow's God," to comfort and protect them after his departure.—But more than all, he is earnest in exhorting them, steadily to resist all temptations to evil; and so to live in the love and practice of every Christian virtue, that they may all

meet and rejoice together, in that thrice happy land, which neither sickness nor sorrow can ever enter.

O that the sinner could look upon a sight like this! that he could see the pious joy and confidence, with which a real Christian quits this earthly scene, and follows the call of his Creator, into an unknown world! Surely it would melt his heart. Surely he would see and confess, that the lot of the righteous is a blessed lot; and, bowing meekly down before the throne of his offended God, begin a new and holy life.

I shall conclude with earnestly exhorting every one of my readers, to look carefully to the path that he is in; for each succeeding day and hour carries him swiftly forward towards misery or blessedness. Surely it concerns us nearly, to be well assured which road we are travelling; for, whether we are aware of it or not, every moment speeds us rapidly down the stream of time, towards the boundless ocean of Eternity. Every day finishes the earthly course of some among us, nor can the youngest or the most vigorous be certain, that God will not summon him the next.

What madness is it then, to delay for a single hour, to make all possible preparation, for a state in which we must live forever! When compared with this great work, all the cares and employments of life, are as nothing. While we have youth and health, then, let us zealously use them in the service of our Maker, rejoicing that we are able, even in the smallest degree, to forward his glorious designs; and if the years of health and youth are over, if unhappily they have been lost in sin and folly, think it not too late, even then, to turn with all your hearts, to God and goodness.—Read your Bible, and lay its righteous precepts to heart. Take Jesus, your holy, humble, and now glorified Master, for your example in all things. Live a life of piety, of soberness, of strict truth and honesty. Have no part in the corrupt practices of the world; flee from them; detest them. “Look not at the things which are seen; but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are TEMPORAL, but the things which are not seen are ETERNAL!”

“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,” for “if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

HINTS TO YOUNG PEOPLE
ON
THE DUTIES
OF
CIVIL LIFE.



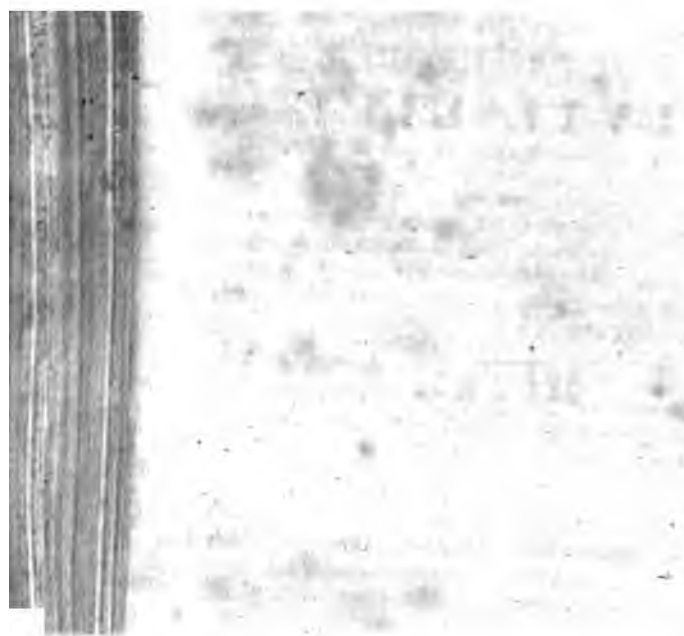
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HINTS

TO

YOUNG PEOPLE.

YOU are now at that season of life when your minds are susceptible of improvement. Your faculties are expanding; and exercise will increase their powers. Your understanding is now inquisitive, and eager for information. Let it be your study to direct it to the contemplation of proper objects, and to the acquisition of useful knowledge. If it be left uncultivated, you may conceive false notions of things; and you will probably imbibe such prejudices, as may give a wrong bias to your conduct through life, and in a great measure deprive you of the satisfaction and benefit that may be derived from civil society.

Now is indeed the seed time of life; and *according to what you sow, you shall reap*. The direction which you now give to your desires and passions, will be likely to continue. Beware, then, at your first setting out in life, of those seducing appearances of pleasure that surround you. It often happens, that, by a continued series of loose, though apparently trivial gratifications, the heart is thoroughly corrupted. Guard, therefore, against accounting any thing small or trivial, which is in hazard of introducing disorder into your hearts. Set out with the intention, that usefulness and active goodness shall direct your pursuits: thus will each in his place, contribute to the general welfare, and reap the benefit of his own improvement.

All the duties of civil life, are embraced in our obligations to do good. Civil life is a commerce of mutual assistances, to which the most virtuous bring the greatest share. In seeking the good of others, you will generally ensure your own. People who live only for themselves, are despicable creatures. Self-love sometimes occasions us to commit great crimes ; and, in its most innocent state, it weakens the virtues and harmonies of society, and conceals from us our own faults.

By reflecting frequently upon your own failings, and showing them to yourselves without disguise, you will at once derive sentiments of humility and benevolence.

Upon your first entering on the stage of action in the world, to keep *good company*, will be of great importance to you. It will give you a relish for such company ; and thus you will be likely to receive proper impressions ; and early impressions, whether right or wrong, often determine our future conduct in life. Associate, therefore, with those from whose conduct and conversation, you may, by proper attention, gain instruction and useful knowledge. You may rest assured that you will sink or rise to the level of the company you keep. People will, and not without reason, judge of you by that. Bad company is often fatal to young people. If you associate with those whose habits of life are immoral and irregular, you can hardly fail to be corrupted by the pernicious influence of their example, and by the destructive tendency of the sentiments which they will endeavour to insinuate into your minds, to the exclusion of the better principles which you may have possessed. Cautiously avoid the company of such persons.

Even if the company you keep be not of the libertine or vicious kind, yet if it withdraw you from that attention to yourselves and your domestic concerns which becomes a good man, it must be unprofitable, and may be very injurious.

There is a class of young men, who think to distinguish themselves by an air of libertinism, but which degrades them in the opinion of sensible persons. It shows not a superiority of mind, but a depravity of heart. Purity of manners, and respect for religion, are necessary to those who would wish to be respected by worthy people. Virtue exalts the condition of man, as much as vice degrades it. The basis of happiness is that peace of mind which results from the testimony of a good conscience.

It is our duty as well as interest, to endeavour to promote intellectual and moral improvement in conversation. Seek not to shine. Remember that simplicity, accompanied with a pleasing mildness, and a proper regard for the feelings of others, is the first charm in manner, as truth is in mind. Remember also, that this mildness, and regard for others' feelings, ought not to be an occasional ornament, but an every-day habit—not put on merely when you go into company, but steadily worn when at home, where it is most needed. If people would always observe it at home, it would prove an efficacious preventive to the frequent recurrence of those jars and wranglings by which the happiness of many families is destroyed.

If a due regard for the feelings of others were properly cherished both at home and abroad, that gentleness and strict civility which give security and pleasure to our social intercourse, would, in all companies, and on all occasions, be maintained. Civility and true politeness are near akin : they consist not in an adherence to unmeaning forms of ceremony ; but in a nice observance of the feelings of others, and an invariable respect for those feelings. To express (without an indispensable necessity) what you suspect may wound the feelings of any present, whether it respects themselves, their profession in life, their religious opinions, or their manners, is uncivil, and is neither a trait of a good education, nor an improved mind. If any present have a

particular weakness or infirmity, genuine civility will not allow you to exercise your wit by inventing occasions which may expose or betray it; but will lead you to give as favourable a turn as you can to the weakness of such.

To treat the frailties of our fellow-creatures with tenderness, to correct their errors with kindness, to view even their vices with pity, and to induce, by every friendly attention, a mutual good will, are not only important moral duties, but means of increasing the sum of earthly happiness.

Polite or well-behaved people discover a modesty without bashfulness, a candour without bluntness, a freedom without assurance. They do not rudely contradict each other. They are attentive to what is said, and reply with mildness and condescension. They neither intermeddle unnecessarily with the affairs, nor pry into the secrets, of others. Thus, their conduct being easy, agreeable, and consistent with sincerity, they command respect. In short, true civility or politeness, is that kind of behaviour which unites firmness with gentleness of manners, and which springs from a disposition to please, but never at the expense of integrity.

But there is a description of people who style themselves *plain dealers*; they speak what they think, with a rough bluntness, and uncontrolled freedom, without respect to time or place. They openly reprove the faults of others, and throw out their satire indiscriminately. Such persons, however unexceptionable their morals, and however true their remarks, are, notwithstanding, unpleasant companions.

In conversation, mark well what others say or do. Accurate observation, and reflection upon men and things, give wisdom. Those are the great books of learning, too seldom read. Be always on your watch, but particularly

swer. Aim not to use fine words, but rather to convey good sense; and chiefly to be pertinent and plain. The truest eloquence is the plainest; and the most concise style is generally the best. Never exchange simplicity of manners, speech, or behaviour, for that which is the effect of false taste, or servile imitation. Banish art and affectation; for you will not make yourselves agreeable by either. Strict sincerity, with unassuming manners, will gain you the esteem and confidence of your acquaintance.

Do good when you can—Speak evil of none—these are important lessons; the latter should be so indelibly imprinted on your mind, as to keep you on your guard, in all company, and on all occasions; so that you may avoid saying any thing of an absent person that will tend to lessen his reputation. For, although evil-speaking too frequently forms a considerable part of common conversation, this does not lessen its criminality, nor palliate the injury done to the reputation of our neighbour. Avoid, therefore, and discourage every kind of detraction. Listen not to slander. Never judge with rigour, nor condemn any person unheard. Remember, there are things resembling truth, that are not true. In private judgment we should imitate the equity of public decisions. Judges never decide without examining the grounds of accusation, and hearing the defence of the accused. It would indeed be great injustice, if they did so.

And let me impress it upon you, that a sense of justice should be the principle on which you should act. In your earliest intercourse with the world, and even in your youthful amusements, permit no unfairness of any kind. Despise that gain which cannot be obtained without mean arts. Stoop to no dissimulation; for it will sink you into contempt. Engrave on your minds this sacred rule; "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

And as justice is due to man, so is tenderness to the

brute creation ; since both originate from the same principle. To torment any living creature, even the least insect, is an act of inhumanity. They are alike subject to pain with ourselves. The All-wise Creator, whose mercies are over all his works, did not give us dominion over the beasts of the field, that we should exercise it with cruelty. Yet how often do we see them treated with the most unfeeling barbarity ! particularly that useful animal, the horse ; how he is lashed and driven, as if he were void of sensation, or of a capability of suffering by extreme fatigue ! And the faithful dog, how frequently is he kicked about and abused.

Endeavour not only to have your temper so governed by reason, as to avoid abuse to brutes, but to possess such coolness of mind, and serenity of countenance, as to be able to hear disagreeable things from your fellow-men without anger, and agreeable ones without sudden bursts of joy. If from any cause you feel a hasty rise of passion, resolve not to utter a word while that emotion continues. Determine to keep your countenance as unmoved, and as unembarrassed as possible. People are sometimes led into great inconsistencies by giving way to anger. By silence, or a gentle and meek answer, the offending person will sooner be convinced of his error, than by a return of angry expressions. Passionate persons often make others unhappy, and themselves miserable. Indeed people, when angry, are not properly themselves. Silence, therefore, is the best answer to passion ; and will frequently conquer what resistance would inflame.

Never give the least place to feelings of hatred and vengeance. Revenge is ignoble. If any one has injured you, seek satisfaction in manifesting a moderation greater than the malice of your adversary. By forgiving his offence, you will in some measure disarm your enemy, and perhaps convert his enmity into friendship. Indeed, the Christian

has but one means of obtaining satisfaction, that of doing good to those who injure him. This is the most delicate, the most effectual, and the only allowable retaliation. He that pardons, feels a satisfaction as much above what vengeance affords, as pleasure exceeds pain.

And be assured, that the greatest errors, or the most erroneous principles, which it is possible for men to embrace, will never warrant in us the exercise or indulgence of a malevolent disposition towards them. From every view of perfection, the idea of ill will is totally excluded. And every degree of kindness, or a disposition to do good, becomes proportionably a source of happiness to the benevolent mind. To cultivate feelings of benevolence and love towards our fellow-creatures of every description, is a Christian duty. And were the spirit of true Christian charity, to become, as it ought to be, the distinguishing characteristic of professing Christians, it would banish from among them the despicable principles of bigotry and superstition, which have caused such bickerings and animosities, and which have so debased the character of the professed followers of Christ.

Be faithful to your promises: but, that your word may obtain entire confidence, be careful how and what you promise. Observe truth even in trifling things. To disregard it, is wicked as well as contemptible.

Be humble without being bashful. Bashfulness is sometimes a secret pride. The medium between improper bashfulness and disgusting forwardness, marks the well-bred man. He feels himself firm and easy in company; is modest, without being bashful, and steady, without being impudent. He is not disposed to engross the conversation, but to give others an opportunity of being equally free and unrestrained. When he converses with strangers, he does not incautiously condemn their customs and habits, by arrogantly holding up those of his own native place as much

preferable. Such a man converses with his superiors, with ease and respect; with his inferiors, without insolence; and with his equals, with that becoming freedom and cheerfulness, which are so grateful and pleasing in conversation.

The vain man is so full of himself, that, at every turn, it is *I* who does this or that. Tell him any thing—he has known it long ago: he either outruns information, or else proudly rejects it. Whereas, the greatest understandings are not only the most ready to learn, but generally the least arrogant.

Self-conceit, presumption, and obstinacy, tend greatly to lessen their possessors in the view of sensible persons: and, in youth, to blast the prospects of future improvement and usefulness.—“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit; there is more hope of a fool than of him.”

In relating what has happened, omit every circumstance that is not material. Neither indulge in digressions, which may render useful communications tiresome, nor relate marvellous things, that may require proofs to be believed.

Avoid whispering in company: it bespeaks ill-breeding; and is in some degree a fraud, conversation being a joint and common stock.

Mimicry is the common and favourite amusement of low minds: practise it not yourselves, nor applaud it in others.

As I am not only pointing out traits of conduct that are offensive and blameable, but such as are merely unpleasant, I will mention the too prevalent habit of loud laughing; which, to say the best of it, is a disagreeable one. It is generally excited by low jests, or silly devices, which people of reputation and good sense, should show themselves above. Sensible conversation gives a cheerfulness to the countenance, but seldom provokes loud laughter. Some people accustom themselves to laugh when speaking. These habits, though not criminal, are unpleasant, and ought to be avoided.

to some useful subject. History, literature, and the customs of particular countries, surely afford better and safer topics than dress, personal character, or such stories as afford no valuable information.

Be cautious of entertaining company with your own personal concerns, or private affairs: though they are interesting to yourselves, they are generally tedious to others.

Never say a word that can be construed into a desire for applause. Do not imagine that any thing you can say respecting yourselves, will either varnish your defects, or add lustre to your perfections. Indeed, discreet, well-educated persons rarely find opportunity to speak much of themselves: they are better employed. Those who speak little of themselves, but who set other people's merit in its true light, make a favourable impression upon the minds of their hearers, and acquire their love and esteem. They who are less anxious to obtain, than to merit the approbation of others, generally do both.

Never maintain an argument with heat and clamour, though you are confident of being in the right; but give your opinion coolly and modestly, that being the best way to convince. If you cannot do that, try to change the conversation in a gentle, easy way: for truth often suffers more from the heat of its defenders, than from the arguments of its opposers. If you would convince others, stand open to conviction yourselves; and if you would please others, endeavour to be easily pleased. To acknowledge a mistake when convinced of it, indicates an ingenuous mind. But obstinately to adhere to our sentiments when we are convinced of their error, bespeaks stubbornness, pride, and self-importance.

The high opinion people entertain of themselves, leads them to be inattentive to what others say; and to assert their own opinions, and supposed rights, with so much haughtiness, and contempt for those of others. A daring confidence is disgusting; while that becoming modesty

which generally accompanies true merit, engages the minds of people in our favour. Consider how disagreeable an impression the inattentive behaviour, and the imperious manner of a stranger make upon you, at your first interview. That which, in others, pleases or displeases you, will in you generally please or displease them.

To escape the accusation of being desirous to be thought learned, or of passing for scholars, abstain from any display of your learning, how great soever it may be. Seek not to appear wiser or more learned, than the company you are in. And whatever you converse about, let it be in an easy, natural, and unaffected manner. The manner of doing things, is sometimes more important than the things themselves. If you have occasion to contradict any body, or to correct his mistake, avoid bluntly saying, "That is not so," "I know better;" but rather express a belief that it is a mistake, or misinformation: or ask the question, Is it not thus, or so? For though you may know a thing better than other people, yet it is displeasing to tell them so, directly, without something to soften the expression. And may you who have superior learning, or other useful qualifications, or who possess riches or power, bear in mind, that these can only render their possessor happy in proportion as he employs them to increase the happiness of others. They are instruments in his hands: the wants and helplessness of mankind are the objects to which they are to be applied. Of their use an account is to be rendered. To what end they were designed, how they have been used, and what reckoning awaits them, are subjects for solemn reflection.

A taste for useful employments and literary instruction, tends to solidity of judgment. Those who can cheerfully relieve the wearisomeness of domestic concerns by a well-chosen book, will escape from many of the follies and indiscretions, to which those are liable, whose resource is dissipated or gossiping company: or the chit-chat of visit-

ing acquaintance. The lovers of industry and of books, will generally visit others, or be visited themselves, from affection and esteem : and their object will be improvement, as well as pleasure. Their home will be secured from dulness, by a mind invigorated by useful information. By their reading of books judiciously chosen, the understanding is enlarged ; useful precepts and examples are learned ; a knowledge of the customs, manners, government, and laws, of different nations, is obtained ; and reflection and meditation are promoted. And, though I shall not attempt to point out a course of reading, yet suffer me to urge you to let the Holy Scriptures have the first place. Read them frequently, and with minds desirous of being benefited : then you will find them both delightful and instructive. The Old Testament should be read for history, chiefly ; the Psalms, for meditation and devotion ; but the New Testament, for doctrine, faith, and practice. And here, dear young people, permit me to entreat you, as you value your best interest, not to spend your precious time in reading novels, plays, tales of wonder, and such other books, as your best feelings, if attended to, will tell you are calculated to corrupt your minds, by leading them into vanity, and unprofitable pursuits, if not into erroneous principles. They often fill the minds of those who indulge in reading them, with visionary notions ; and hence the conversation of such is frivolous and trifling, and they are rendered unfit for the useful intercourse of society.

Although history affords much necessary and useful information, yet, in many of the histories, both of ancient and modern times, the crimes and the vices of historic heroes are frequently so represented, that the feeling mind is shocked on reading them. History often presents a disgusting, terrible list of crimes and calamities. Murders, assassinations, battles and revolutions, are the memorable events of history. The historian makes the love of glory atone for military barbarity ; treachery and fraud are frequently dignified

with the names of prudence and policy. Yet, desirous to appear moral, he makes out an inconsistent and ambiguous system of morality. If you are not careful, when reading such histories, to maintain correct ideas of right and wrong, (I mean such as Christianity inculcates,) and to guard yourselves from being deceived by the gloss which the historian puts on heroism, and the unchristian conduct attendant on war; you may be led into great and fatal error. Therefore, when you read those shocking accounts of military barbarity, and of the dreadful consequences of war, cherish the just abhorrence and sorrow which you feel, as arising from that spirit of love and tenderness which the gospel inculcates, and which characterizes the Christian.

And let me again, for a moment, invite the attention of young men to the subject of war. Although war, for purposes which, though doubtless wise, are to us inscrutable, was permitted to the Jews, yet we are under the gospel. That this dispensation is widely different from that of the law, Christ has taught us by his precepts and doctrine, and particularly pointed out, in his memorable sermon on the mount. He has, moreover, confirmed it by his example of love, and self-denial, and by doing good on all occasions, to every description of people, even to his greatest enemies who sought his life, and who finally crucified him. How he manifested his kindness, and disposition to forgive injuries, by healing the wounded ear of one, and praying for the forgiveness of them all: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" I wish you to examine the nature and design of Christianity, as set forth in the New Testament; and judge for yourselves, whether the love, meekness, and forbearance, which the Saviour practised and strongly inculcated, and which his apostles so forcibly recommended as the main pillar of Christianity, is or is not in direct opposition to the ambitious, revengeful, cruel spirit that generates and supports war. If so, do not suffer yourselves to be

led into error, by public opinion or common practice. For remember, to be a Christian is to be of the disposition of Christ ; to forgive injuries, to love and pray for enemies, to do good to those that hate us, and to resist not evil. "He hath set us an example that we should follow his steps," says the apostle Peter.

Now, leaving the subject of war, accept of a few more hints on the employment of the early years of life. While you are young, form your reputation ; increase, by your prudent conduct, your respectability ; put your affairs in proper order ; let your expenses be governed by moderation and economy. Retrench superfluous ones, that you may be enabled to bear those which propriety, friendship, and charity, demand. Make a fund of your frugality, that you may draw thereon for the service of the needy. In a word, squander no time in idleness, but employ your leisure to some good purpose. Waste nothing that may be useful to others, because we are accountable to the bountiful Giver, for the right use of both time and property. There can be no excuse (even where wealth abounds) that will justify waste and extravagance ; neither can any justifiable plea be offered for hoarding up riches, while there are so many deserving poor, who are in want of the necessities of life.

Industry and frugality are by no means necessarily connected with an avaricious disposition. Economy is not inconsistent with generosity. It steers the middle course between extravagance and covetousness. It is observable that the most industrious, are frequently the most liberal. I wish you to be liberal, but not prodigal ; diligent, but not avaricious ; frugal, but not sordid.

By industry and economy, we are enabled to be charitable, and sometimes liberal. And where charity keeps pace with gain, we may hope for a blessing on diligence. But to toil for wealth, in order to keep it sordidly laid up, is a sin against Providence.

Liberality differs from Charity in this ; that she has sometimes other objects ; she not only relieves the poor, but also casts her eye on those who do not absolutely want. She finds out virtue in low degree, in order to exalt it. She eases the burden of those who labour hard to live ; many kind and generous turns are found at her hand by those who do not quite want. The decayed, and the widow, and the fatherless, partake of her kindness. She takes care of one child, and finds homes for others, to lighten the loads of overcharged parents. True liberality is bounteous, but not lavish ; she confers true nobility upon man, and doubles the blessings of prosperity.

Never listen to the cravings of vanity. Young people are apt to wish to appear like others. But this desire extends a great way, and is seldom satisfied. Moderate your wishes with respect to dress. Excess in apparel is a costly folly. The more simple clothes are, the better. Let them be neither unshapely nor fantastical. Let them be made for use and decency, and not for pride. Nature requires not studied ornaments. A plain manner is in general the most ornamental. A modest dress has been considered a shield to virtue. With simplicity of attire, we commonly see a becoming neatness ; and a uniform neatness, is certainly preferable to a splendid display of finery at one time, and a mean or negligent appearance at another. The imputation of the want of neatness and delicacy, is a great stigma on the female character. If young people contract a slovenly manner, they will seldom acquire a habit of neatness, when advanced in years. On the contrary, if, when young, people are habitually neat and clean, they will rarely, if ever, be seen otherwise.

The world talks much of fortune, riches, and greatness ; but wisdom says, " Lower your desires to things simple." Lay aside unnecessary expenses, and learn to be satisfied with a plain, simple, temperate way of living : the real comforts

of life are far from being lessened thereby. Remember that the necessities of real life require but little ; those of opinion and imagination, much.

In expectation of great happiness and enjoyment, mankind aspire after situations in life above those they are in ; but alas ! when their wishes are attained, how are the possessors disappointed ! New wants and desires arise ; new objects are required to gratify them ; dissatisfaction continues ; and the void which was to have been filled, remains as great as ever. Seek not, therefore, to be rich or great, but to be happy : and if you would be happy, bring your minds to your condition, and desire not superfluities. Contentment and resignation will find comfort, even in a lowly situation. Be humble, and you will learn contentment ; and cheerfully accommodate yourselves to that station of life, in which you may be placed.

And, as the friendships you form, may materially affect your happiness, let your intimates be few, though your acquaintance may necessarily be large. And be not hasty in the choice of confidants. Let prudence and discretion direct you in the selection. In true friendship there is a mutual regard, accompanied with a desire to improve and benefit each other, without any motives of self-interest. A proper sense of virtue and honour, are necessary qualifications in an intimate companion. Where these prevail, and are attended with a free, sincere, kind, and obliging disposition, the conversation of friends will be pleasing and instructive, and they will be likely to strengthen each other in the practice of virtue.

A still more important and solemn engagement in life, is that of marriage. Enter not unadvisedly into it. Be not hasty in making choice of a companion. Keep in mind the importance of the undertaking, and act with great caution. An attachment hastily formed, or founded merely on personal charms, is seldom lasting : and if riches be the motive,

It is very doubtful whether real happiness in enjoyment will be its consequent. Matrimonial union and felicity must have something more solid for their basis. To be previously well acquainted with the principles, temper, and habits of the person you propose to marry, is very necessary. There is but little probability, that a married state will be happy, or free from inquietude, if it is not founded on virtue. And even where there are traits of virtue, if there is not a coincidence of religious sentiment, there is little probability, that even a comfortable harmony will be maintained, especially in educating a family of children. When marriage has been entered into without previous circumspection, repentance comes too late.

As entering into the married state is serious, so the duties of it are very momentous ; and if duly attended to will teach the wedded pair to contribute as much as possible to each other's ease and contentment ; both in prosperity and adversity. The same assiduity should be used to preserve affection, as to gain it. If you would preserve love, endeavour to acquire those happy dispositions which are attractive and durable ; bearing in mind, that between man and wife, nothing but love ought to rule. Authority is for children and servants, and not even these without sweetness. Sweetness of temper, cheerfulness in conversation, and tenderness of feeling, will tend greatly to establish and preserve matrimonial happiness and cordiality. But, on the contrary, if a little self-will in one, should be met with anger in the other ; or some trifling misconduct, with upbraiding ; if there should be reproach instead of forbearance, and sullenness and indifference, instead of good humour and kindness ; if while the wife is prudent and economical at home, the husband is squandering away time and property in diversions and extravagance abroad ; or if, on the other hand, the wife runs into costly finery, and other superfluous expenses, which the industrious husband, with all his exer-

tions cannot afford to pay ; conjugal felicity must be greatly lessened, if not destroyed.

Among other duties, may you not forget the obligations of love and gratitude due to those who gave you birth. To honour our parents, is a divine law. To assist them when they need assistance, if it is in our power to do so, is a debt we owe them. It manifests great want of filial duty, not to provide for those in the infirmities of old age, who so amply provided for us in the helpless state of childhood. Indeed much of the happiness of parents, frequently depends on the conduct of their children : it is from them that they expect to derive comfort in the decline of life. How strong are the ties which unite affectionate parents to their children who repay their tenderness by kind attention, care, and assistance !

As a family is the common consequence of marriage, and as servants or hired people generally make part of the family, permit me to remind you, that servitude, being established contrary to the natural rights of man, ought to be softened as much as possible ; and that servants should be made to feel their condition as little as may be. Do not bear hard upon them ; it bespeaks littlepess of spirit to behave with loftiness to those who are subject to us. Mildness of command creates love in children, and respect in servants ; and tends greatly to preserve domestic enjoyment, as well as to enforce obedience. But when commands are arbitrary and imperious, they are destructive to social harmony. Never use illiberal words ; these are what a polite and delicate person should always avoid. Have we, who show our own faults so often, a right to expect domestics without them ? It is our duty to inspect their moral conduct, as well as their labour ; and in particulars of which they are ignorant, we should instruct them. And when they find us ready to assist and advise them, to promote their welfare, and to render them easy in their situation, they will feel not only an interest in our concerns, but a respect for us, which will

make them unwilling to offend. Whatever virtues you wish to find in servants, should be always found in yourselves. A good example will be the likeliest means of preserving them in a uniform course of regular life. But a bad one may corrupt the best inclinations.

It is a common saying, that "Despatch is the life of business." And nothing tends more to despatch, than order. Lay down a method for every thing, and adhere to it invariably, as far as unexpected incidents will allow. "Do one thing at a time," is an excellent maxim. By strict attention to the object in view, and by never putting off till to-morrow, what may be done to-day, you will accomplish more, and in a better manner, than by hurry, bustle, and agitation. Bear in mind that whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. It facilitates business much, for people to have the implements for doing it, regularly put in their proper places, that they may know where to find them. Some people often spend as much time in looking for their tools, as is required to do the work for which they want them. The proper example of the husband, in his department, and of the wife in hers, will soon teach their family regularity. Do every thing in its own time; keep every thing in its own place; and have every thing for its own use. A want of attention to these rules, and of method in arranging business, is the characteristic of those who have much to do, and get but little done; who are frequently in a bustle, who have many things begun, but who finish nothing. The man of order avoids two extremes—a multiplicity of mixed affairs, which often produces hurry and confusion—and a total want of business—and thus he steers clear of idleness, that most fruitful source of crimes and evils.

In order to reap the advantages of regularity and method, you should adopt early rising. But, to do this, it will be necessary to avoid a practice which has become too fashionable at least in many places—that of retiring late to rest.

The night is properly allotted to sleep ; because the darkness with which we are then surrounded, is less favourable to business, and is particularly auspicious to rest. When the light of day withdraws, how naturally do the brute creation retire to their repose ! The solemn stillness of the night, invites us to do the like. But at present too many seem to reject the invitation ; and to confound, as it were, the system of Providence, by the unnatural practice of devoting much of the night both to business and pleasure, and of the day to sleep. Thus, that part of the day which is spent in sleep, will be to such a perfect blank, for to them the sun will shine almost in vain. Early rising contributes to health, invigorates the faculties, and enables us to appropriate each part of the day to its respective purposes.

Too few people are good economists of time. The young are apt to think they have so much of it before them, that they may squander it as they please, and yet have enough left : in the same manner that great estates have frequently seduced their possessors to a ruinous profusion. Fatal mistake ! always repented of, but generally too late. Those half-hours, and hours, in the course of the day, which people think too short to deserve their attention, would at the end of the year, amount to a considerable portion of time.

The principle of being accountable for time, if once fixed in the mind, will lead the conscientious person into an inquiry, whether he spends his time as he ought ; whether some of his recreations or amusements do not encroach upon hours which ought to be dedicated to better purposes ; and whether they ought not, therefore, to be at least abridged. He will not be contented to spend large portions of time harmlessly ; they must also be spent profitably. And it will not even be enough, that his present pursuits are good, if he is convinced they might be still better. Thus he will be making continual progress in his improvement of time. His love of frivolous amusements will decrease, in direct pro-

portion to the increase of his relish for those pleasures which religion enjoins and bestows. And as his views become new, so his dispositions, tastes, and pursuits, will be new also.

You will doubtless perceive that one object of the preceding remarks, has been to encourage industry, and a regular and careful attention to business ; in the pursuit of which, and indeed in all your doings, permit me to call your attention to that comprehensive passage of the apostle, "Let your moderation be known unto all men ; the Lord is at hand." As if he had said, Look to your ways ; have a care what you do : for the Lord is near you ; he sees you ; he marks your steps ; and he will judge you accordingly. Let this excellent, this serious and close sentence live in your minds, and influence all your actions ; thus the world will be properly estimated, and no extremes will prevail. And it will be salutary, frequently to examine, not only your conduct, but your motives—not only what you do, but why you do it.

Having thus endeavoured to point out some of the duties of social life, and the requisites to make you agreeable companions, I now give it as my fixed belief, that with every other accomplishment, without religion you cannot be happy, even in this life. The happiness of man depends more upon the state of his mind, than upon any other circumstance ; nay, more than upon all external things put together. Therefore, unless we possess, what real religion produces—a conscience void of offence, and a well-governed mind,—the highest prosperity and worldly enjoyments will not afford substantial happiness. Those expectations of bliss which rest on earthly possessions and pleasures, will end in disappointment.

But religion, by teaching a dependence on that supreme Providence which disposes of human affairs, prepares the mind to meet trials and disappointments ; yea, and to bear

the most severe shocks of adversity, with becoming fortitude. Thus a good man, by adopting the Psalmist's maxim—"Trust in the Lord, and do good," enjoys more real comfort in the course of a seemingly unprosperous life, than an irreligious man in the midst of affluence and luxury.

The foundation of pure religion, is the fear and love of God, demonstrated by good works—works which show forth the Lord's praise, not in word only, but in deed. This religion leads into practical piety; produces rectitude of heart, and subjection of our wills to the divine will; disposes us to do unto all men as we would they should do unto us; breathes gentleness and affability; and teaches us to cultivate love and harmony in society; and, in short, inspires us with love and good-will to the whole human family.

And, accordingly, the all wise Creator has so inseparably connected love to God with love to men, as well as faith with good works, and piety with charity; that it is only when they are united, that they can be acceptable to him.

Languages and customs may greatly differ; but that pure devotion of the heart to its Maker, which flows from undiluted love, is one and the same in all nations.

And as religion connects a preparation for heaven with an honourable discharge of the duties of active life, it does not require a retreat from the world, but usefulness in it. Yet it so far disengages us from the spirit of the world, as to weaken its power of disturbing our tranquillity. But let it not be forgotten, that religion is not stationary: to be valuable, it must be progressive: and the purity of the soul increases in proportion as the natural will becomes subjected to the divine will.

This is the religion you must experience in order to attain real happiness: and, to arrive at the saving knowledge of it, consult the Scriptures, more than the systems of men; but attend still more to that divine principle in your own hearts, which the apostle, in speaking to the gentiles, terms

the grace of God; and which he declares has appeared to all men, teaching us to deny ungodliness and the world's lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

The same apostle asserts, that "What is to be known of God is manifest within. And that a manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." It is this grace, manifestation of the Spirit, or, as it is also in Scripture called, light, Spirit of God, Christ within, &c., that shows men right and wrong; checks them in their way to evil; reproves them while in the act of committing it; brings on them remorse, sadness, and distress of mind, when evil is committed. And it is by submitting to the teachings of this inward monitor, that we both learn, and are enabled to fulfil, our duty to God and to one another.

And now, in closing these hints, suffer me to caution you against continuing in a line of conduct for which you feel condemned: for if you do this, and stifle the convictions you feel, your inward reproofs will probably be less frequent, and, in time, make little or no impression. Sad situation! that you may escape it by a ready submission to manifested duty, even in giving up gratifications that are as a right hand or a right eye, is the sincere wish of one who much desires your present and future happiness.

A
LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

THE KING,

BY THOMAS THRUSH,

ON RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION

AS A CAPTAIN IN THE ROYAL NAVY,

ON THE GROUND OF

THE UNLAWFULNESS OF WAR.



“Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar’s; and unto God, the things which are God’s.”

“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.”

.....
NO. 29.
.....

New-York:

A VARIETY OF TRACTS, ON MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, ARE
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1825.

M. DAY, PRINTER.

A LETTER, &c.

"I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

SIRE,

WHEN a subject presumes publicly to address his sovereign, on a matter which he deems of the very highest importance to the welfare and happiness of mankind, he cannot, if his motives are pure, help feeling much anxiety to acquit himself in a way that may best promote his views ; that may give no offence to the sovereign he addresses ; and that may, as much as possible, disarm public censure.

This, Sire, is my case : and when I inform Your Majesty that the purport of this letter is to announce my resignation of the commission and rank I hold in Your Majesty's Naval Service, from a conviction that my retaining them is incompatible with my Christian profession, it will be obvious that my situation, if not one of great difficulty, is, at least, one of peculiar delicacy. It will be equally obvious, that it is no easy matter for me to avoid giving offence, or even to escape censure.

The difficulties of my situation are increased by the consideration that I have no precedent for my guidance, either as to the letter I am addressing to Your Majesty, or to the important and unusual act to which this letter relates. In both cases I am acting, and I feel the weighty responsibility, solely on my own judgment,

which I may hereafter see just cause to repent. I trust, Sire, this will not be my case; for on the subject of these pages I have not thought lightly or casually, but seriously and intensely; and this not merely during a week, a month, or even a year, but almost daily for the last three years. After endeavouring to gain the best information on a subject continually becoming more interesting to me; and after imploring the guidance of that Being who alone can direct the hearts of men to what is right; my scruples concerning the accordancy of the military profession with the precepts of the Christian religion have ended in the conviction, that the duties of this profession are altogether irreconcilable with the plain fundamental principles of our holy religion.

Considering the subject-matter of this letter, and the profession of its writer, it might be deemed more respectful to Your Majesty, as well as to the distinguished persons who compose the Board of Admiralty, that I should, according to professional etiquette, address myself to them, through their Secretary. After due consideration, it appears necessary for me, on the present occasion, to depart from this custom. Whether, Sire, I regard Your Majesty as the fountain of military rank and honour, or as the Supreme Head of the Church of Christ in the nation you govern, but more especially as the latter, I feel it to be my duty to address these pages to Your Majesty; and I trust that my boldness, in doing so, will not be considered as a departure from Christian humility, or from the deference and duty justly required from a subject to his sovereign.

When a man, by many years of assiduity and active exertion, has gained a highly respectable rank in his profession; when, indeed, he has nearly arrived at the goal of his wishes,—it may be expected that he will

thankfully enjoy this rank, and its emoluments. But when, instead of doing so, he, in advanced life, resigns these, he is likely to be taxed with something beyond mere imbecility,—the remark of Festus to St. Paul will scarcely be thought too severe for a person acting thus at variance with common feelings and practice. As this remark may possibly be applied to me; I hope, though I have no pretensions to the learning of the Apostle, that I may be permitted to answer in his words, that “I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”

To account for a conduct so perfectly strange and unusual, is a duty I owe to Your Majesty: but before I proceed to discharge this duty, it may be proper to examine how far I may lawfully, under any circumstances, withdraw myself from my profession.

In whatever light I regard my half-pay, I am duly sensible that my engagement to Your Majesty and my country is one of a very sacred nature, and that I ought to be able to adduce weighty and satisfactory reasons for the step I am taking. I cannot be ignorant that such a line of conduct, if generally adopted, would produce very important consequences to society in all nations: I therefore feel it, not only an imperative duty to Your Majesty, to my brother-officers, and to the world at large, but also a most sacred duty to my Maker, that I should, with the greatest plainness, state my reasons, or rather my apology, for a proceeding which as far as I know, is in modern times unprecedented. In doing this, it will be my most anxious wish and endeavour to observe that deference and profound respect justly due

from a wish to withhold from Your Majesty the honour justly due to you ; but from an overpowering anxiety to “ render unto God the things that are God’s.”

Although Sir, I feel the fullest conviction that the case I am going, hypothetically, to state, could not under any circumstances happen to me ; yet permit me to suppose, though living under your protection, that I should so far forget my obligations and my allegiance to Your Majesty as to unite myself to your enemies. Were I, by any possibility, implicated in a transaction so truly degrading, I should consider it as my first duty, as soon as I became sensible of the enormity of my crime, to make the most ample and the most public reparation for it. Though my doing so might subject me to the charge of cowardice and treachery ; yet, unquestionably, it would be my bounden duty to retrace my steps and return to my allegiance to you, my lawful sovereign ; and it would be equally my duty to do this in the most public manner.

In some points my own real situation appears to me very similar to the imaginary case I have here stated. With much zeal and sincerity I entered into the Naval Service of Your Majesty’s revered Father, and swore allegiance to him. This allegiance is now, of course, due to Your Majesty, as his lawful successor. When I entered into this solemn contract, I entertained no apprehension that I was acting in opposition to the principles of the Christian religion ; nor did any apprehension of this kind ever arise in my mind during the time I was actively employed in the service of my country. Nay, so far from suspecting that I was departing from Christian rectitude, it appeared to me almost certain, if I should lose my life in the service of my king and my country, that this would serve as a kind of passport to

he favour and acceptance of God. This opinion, which has been frequently inculcated by ministers of the Gospel of Peace, as well as by pagan writers, is, I believe, generally entertained by those who think at all when they enter the naval or military profession.

Those, Sire, who live much in the world are imperceptibly led to think, and act, upon the principles of those with whom they associate. Though, in the busy scenes of naval service, I never entertained an idea of my profession being irreconcilable with the religion of Christ; yet, after passing several years in retirement bordering on seclusion; and after more closely inspecting the Christian precepts, and reviewing my past life, it appears to me that while I have been serving my king and my country, if not brilliantly, yet faithfully, I have been acting in open disobedience to the plain and positive commands of another and a superior Master,—a Master whose claims upon my allegiance are prior, and paramount, to those of Your Majesty, or of any earthly sovereign.

Christianity being considered as a part of the laws of the land, it would seem reasonable to conclude, that so long as a subject obeys the precepts of the divine Founder of this religion, he can hardly fail in any important duty to his sovereign. In other words, if a subject is careful to “render unto God the things that are God’s,” it will be hardly possible for him to withhold from his sovereign those things that are lawfully due to him. In Christianity one duty implies the other; and thus the duty to the Prince is placed upon the most solid foundation, as forming an essential part of a Christian’s duty to God. But, Sire, permit me with great deference and respect to observe, that the claims of any earthly sovereign,

our obedience, ought not, for a moment, to be put in competition with those of our Maker. And it is, Sire, not only our bounden duty, but also our highest interest, to render unconditional and absolute obedience to God alone.

During the latter part of those years of retirement which I have mentioned, this and other Christian truths have become strongly impressed on my mind ; and conscience has told me, that, however honourable my profession may be considered, it is impossible for a man to be at the same time a faithful follower of Christ and a warrior by profession. The moment a man sells himself to his sovereign, or to his country, for the purpose of human destruction, he loses *caste* (if I may be allowed the expression) as a Christian. He forfeits that liberty, that freedom to think, to speak, and to act, on moral and religious principles, which, as a Christian, it is his privilege, as well as his duty, to maintain.

If a subject may be permitted to make the remark, Your Majesty appears to entertain opinions similar to these. In confirming the sentence of a Court Martial held on a foreign station on two officers for disobedience of orders, Your Majesty most justly observes that, "IF RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES WERE ALLOWED TO BE URGED BY INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS AS A PLEA FOR DISOBEDIENCE OF ORDERS, THE DISCIPLINE OF THE ARMY WOULD SUSTAIN AN INJURY WHICH MIGHT BE DANGEROUS TO THE STATE." Surely, Sire, this is equivalent to saying that men who are imbued with RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES, or Christians, are unfit for the military service. Of the justice of Your Majesty's remark, or of the equity of the sentence of the court, no one conversant in military discipline can entertain a doubt. Thinking men, who believe that their professional duty interferes with their duty to God, ought not to halt between two opinions

Since I have been led to the examination of the foregoing opinions, my convictions from reflection and from reading, especially from reading the Holy Scriptures, have become established. Indeed there is scarcely a chapter in the New Testament that does not virtually condemn war,—scarcely a command, or a precept, to which a professed warrior can pay unconditional obedience. I therefore, Sire, as a Christian, looking forward to existence beyond the grave, feel myself compelled to resign, and lay at Your Majesty's feet, that commission in your Naval Service, which I laboured with diligence and fidelity to attain; and on which, when attained, no one placed a higher value than myself. I see no alternative, Sire, between doing this and relinquishing those glorious hopes of immortality which our Saviour holds out to those, and to those only, who obey his precepts.

In camps and fleets, and in the busy scenes of public life, the awful threats and the cheering hopes of the Gospel do not receive the serious consideration they deserve. Withdrawn from those scenes, my mind has become more and more impressed with the clearest conviction, that for men to devote themselves to the military profession, and to assemble by thousands for the avowed purpose of deliberately shedding human blood, is as clearly contrary to the plain and positive precepts of Jesus, as it is abhorrent to those natural feelings of humanity that, till blunted or perverted by education, are in mercy impressed on our hearts by our wise and benevolent Creator. Entertaining these opinions; believing that they will be approved by my future Judge; and, as a Christian, determined never to draw a sword, or pull a trigger for the purpose of shed-

or an insult for an insult ; I feel myself perfectly unfit for Your Majesty's Naval Service, and I think I should not act either honestly or consistently, in retaining my commission.

I am aware, Sire, that the step I have taken might, in times less liberal and enlightened, have subjected me to severe pains and penalties. I am thankful that I live in times when the Christian religion is not only better understood, but when it is considered as forming an essential part of the laws of the most powerful and civilized nations ; and I feel much confidence that Your Majesty, though you may condemn the step I have taken, will approve the motive by which it has been dictated. Were the subjects of Your Majesty, and of other sovereigns, to act generally on the principle I have adopted, though some local and temporary inconvenience might be the result, extensive and permanent good must be the consummation : nor is it probable that universal peace will ever be established on any other basis than unconditional obedience to the precepts of Jesus.

Suppose, Sire, that instead of Your Majesty's subjects adopting this pacific system, the French, whom, alas ! contrary to the fundamental principles of our religion, we have been trained to regard as our natural enemies,—Suppose, Sire, that they should set the glorious example to the world, and “beat their swords into plough shares :” would Your Majesty, or would your subjects, or would other nations, regard this as a misfortune ? Instead of thus considering it, would it not be hailed by all as a most auspicious event ? And, instead of thereby subjecting themselves to insult, would they not command the admiration, the esteem, and the *friendship, of every civilized, and even of every savage*

nation? May it henceforth, Sire, be the ambition of Britain and France, to set to other nations the glorious example of cultivating a Christian, instead of a martial spirit.

In withdrawing myself from Your Majesty's Naval Service, I have the consolation of doing it in a time of profound peace, when the least possible objection can be made to such a measure. It is also less repugnant to my feelings to retire from half-pay, than from actual service. This pay, I have been led to believe, is not only considered as a reward for past services, but also as a retaining fee for future exertions. Being unwilling to comply with the terms, I feel that I am not entitled to the fee; and that I ought not to receive it. Did I, on the other hand, regard my half-pay as exclusively a reward for past services; having earned it by what I now consider as a transgression of Christian duty, or as a desertion of my allegiance to God, it appears to me, in receiving it, that I virtually renew, or continue my disobedience. If I may be allowed to apply to myself the figurative and emphatical language of St. Paul, "I crucify afresh the Lord Jesus Christ," (THE PRINCE OF PEACE,) "and put him and his religion to an open shame."

To enumerate only a few of the evils emanating from war, would swell this letter far beyond the limits to which it is my wish to confine it. Of war it may safely be affirmed that, if it does not cause, it aggravates every evil, moral or political, by which mankind is assailed. In the Old Testament, war, or the sword, is uniformly spoken of as the instrument whereby God punishes rebellious and idolatrous nations. This ought

I might here, Sire, lay down my pen, trusting that in a situation of considerable difficulty, I have acted, (at least according to the best of my judgement,) on correct Christian principles. It seems necessary, however, upon an occasion like the present, that I should endeavour to prove that I have acted on these principles.

The prophecies of the Old Testament, when taken in connexion with the precepts of the Gospel, appear decisive against the practice of war, under the Christian dispensation. To this evidence I appeal with the more satisfaction, as it affords, at the same time, the pleasing and sure testimony, that the degrading and sanguinary scenes of past and present times are not to endure, but, on the contrary, that they will be succeeded by ages of permanent peace and happiness.

I am not, Sire, so great a visionary as to expect that the example of any individual, much less of one so little known to the world as myself, will have the least influence with others; yet I confidently anticipate that a time will arrive, when not only insulated individuals, but when men in great numbers,—when *the nations*,—when *many people** will act on the same principles that I have done. I do not entertain this belief, merely because I think the divine precepts of the Christian religion are admirably calculated to produce so glorious an event, or because the “signs of the times” lead reflecting persons to expect it; but chiefly because I am a believer in those prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of this devoutly to be wished for event as a certainty. These prophecies give evidence concerning this triumph of Christianity, with as much precision and clearness as they testify the truth of

* Isaiah, ii. 4.

Christianity itself. Their accomplishment, in seems to form a necessary connecting link in the chain of the prophecies concerning Christianity link wanting, the fortress of Christian truth is rendered unassailable, and is exposed to the attacks of Jewish sceptics, who taunt Christians with the remark that religion cannot be true, inasmuch as THE PROMISED PEACE is not yet come into the world. As it was the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles to refer to the prophecies of the Old Testament, it seems that Christians of the present day, in examining any disputed point, such as the lawfulness of war, should follow the example of these infallible guides.

However acute and excellent the writings of learned commentators on the Prophecies, and however decisive the proofs they draw from them of the truth of the Christian revelation, it would seem that some of the most important of these prophecies generally applied to Christianity, are at variance with all history, whether civil or ecclesiastical, of the fourteen or fifteen centuries. The following prophecies are of this description :

1. Isaiah ii. 2. *And it shall come to pass, in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established, and the top of the mountain shall be exalted above the tops of the hills, and all the nations shall flow unto it.*

3. *And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the Lord, that he may teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

4. *And he will judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people : and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks :*

II. Isaiah xi. 1. *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse.*

5. *Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and truthfulness the girdle of his reins.*

6. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the ass shall feed together; and a little child shall lead them.*

7. *And the cow and the bear shall feed: and their young shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

8. *And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.*

9. *They shall not hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

These prophecies, though couched in language so very dissimilar, are no doubt descriptive of the same event, viz. the great happiness destined for mankind through the medium of the Christian religion. This happiness many of the virtuous, the enlightened, and the philanthropic, in all ages since the Christian era, have ardently but vainly wished to see realised. The former prophecy describes this triumph of Christianity in terms so plain and literal, that they cannot be misunderstood. The latter, though couched in symbolical language, is also descriptive of a state of great happiness under the Christian dispensation. In no important particulars these prophecies remain yet to be fulfilled, viz: in establishing peace in the world; and in spreading *that knowledge of the Lord* which is necessary to produce this blessed effect.

Should it be asked, Sire, of what use these prophecies are to Christians of the present day,—are they recorded merely to gratify a prying curiosity, and to convey to them information concerning events which are

to take place at some future and indefinite period, and in which they have no interest or concern? This question is answered by St. Paul; that prophecy (like other parts of Scripture) is "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." These prophecies, therefore, are handed down to inform us that it is the will of the great and benevolent Parent of mankind, and consequently the duty of Christians, to live together in harmony and love, instead of hating and destroying each other by war.—They are written to show us that if wars now exist, the fault is not in Christianity, but in those who are called Christians.—They are written to tell us what effects real Christianity *will* produce hereafter, and consequently what it ought to produce now.—They are written, Sire, to admonish Christians to refrain from war. These prophecies are still more important, for they point out the way to put an end to war; viz:—by spreading abroad Christianity (or "the knowledge of the Lord") till "it shall cover the earth." When Christians cease from war, this undertaking will become comparatively an easy task. Thus understood and applied, these prophecies, instead of being a mere dead letter and a matter of useless speculation, become practically and individually useful; they become, like other parts of Scripture, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

It is well, Sire, for Christians who feel a deep interest for the honour of their religion, that the history of the first two centuries establishes the fact that the professors of Christianity, in those early ages, refrained from

ture from Christian practice than war. Thus, Sire, this departure from the practice of the Apostles and early Christians, like every other fact connected with the Christian history, when duly considered, bears testimony to its truth.

So long as nations professing Christianity shall make a trade of war, the superstructure of Christianity must and will be assailable through these prophecies : but its foundations are imperishable. When Christians shall cease from war, which, on the sure word of prophecy, they will do ; then may we hope that Christianity "will cover the earth," and that "all the kingdoms of this world *will* become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Till then, warriors must be considered as the foes of Christianity.

If, Sire, we ask ourselves the question—what changes would be effected in the moral and political world, if our Lord's sermon on the mount, instead of being a subject of occasional eulogium and admiration, were made the standard rule of men's actions ? Let the prophet Isaiah answer the question : men would "beat their swords into plough-shares," and "nation would not lift up sword against nation, neither would they learn war any more." The all-powerful cause that is to produce these glorious effects is Christianity. Connecting it with the prophecies of the Old Testament, we may consider "the knowledge of the Lord," and Christian knowledge, as the same thing ; and taking the sermon of our Lord on the mount as a summary of this knowledge, we may consider it as the noble instrument that is finally to produce these glorious effects.

The close agreement, Sire, between these prophecies and the probable result of our Saviour's precepts, if practically embraced, affords a strong presumptive proof, *that both the prophecies and the precepts are of divine*

origin. I have, I trust, shown that the former never can be fulfilled so long as Christians shall engage in war. It will be equally easy to show that the precepts of the Gospel can never be complied with by nations or by individuals engaging in war. Their obedience to such precepts and commands as the following, seems to be an impossibility.

Have peace one with another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love.

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another: love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.

Be at peace among yourselves. See that none render evil for evil to any man. God hath called us to peace.

Follow after love, patience, meekness. Be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. Live in peace.

Lay aside all malice. Put off anger, wrath, malice. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

Avenge not yourselves. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Overcome evil with good.

What a strange anomaly, Sire, would be exhibited, were these truly noble and characteristic precepts of the Christian religion placed at the head of every naval or military officer's commission, and at the head of every warlike order issued from the Admiralty or War office, or at the head of every regimental orderly-book! No incongruity could appear greater than such a mixture of war and Gospel—no impossibility more evident than the impossibility of obedience in both cases—no truth more clear than that war and Christianity are ut-

that it has rather the appearance of burlesque than of sober truth. But surely this striking contrariety affords no mean argument that the duties of a Christian and a warrior can never be faithfully discharged by the same individual.

A due consideration of these truly Christian precepts will show us the fallacy of one of the most popular arguments in favour of war, viz: that as the Jews, the highly-favoured people of God, were commanded, by God himself, to wage war, it cannot therefore be sinful for Christians to do the same. But our Saviour has left his followers without this excuse; for he tells them they are not to be guided by the customs of the Jews: "Ye have heard," says he, "that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."—"Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, love them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." The practice of the Jews, therefore, Sire, can be no excuse for Christians to engage in war.

Another popular argument in favour of war is, that the moral precepts of the gospel, though imperative to individuals, may, in cases of necessity, be dispensed with by sovereigns, or nations. On this subject an acute reasoner thus expresses himself: "In the transactions of private persons, no advantage that results from the breach of a general law of justice, can compensate to the public for the violation of the law; *in the concerns of empire this may sometimes be doubted.*" I deeply regret, Sire, that a sentiment so derogatory to Christian morals should have proceeded from the pen of Dr. P.

ley. My regret, however, is softened by the knowledge that Christian sovereigns united in Holy Alliance "have not so learned Christ." These sovereigns solemnly declare "*their fixed resolution, both in the administration of their respective states, and in their political relations with every other government, to take for their SOLE guide the precepts of that holy religion,*" (the Christian :) "*namely, the precepts of justice, Christian charity, and peace, which, far from being applicable only to private concerns, must have an immediate influence on the counsels of princes, and guide all their steps, as being the ONLY means of consolidating human institutions and remedying their imperfections.*" Whenever Christian nations shall act on these principles, wars among them will cease, and "the knowledge of the LORD will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Considering the high importance of the subject-matter of these pages to myself individually, I trust, Sire, that I shall not, in concluding them, be accused of egotism, or of improperly indulging my own feelings or vanity, in stating the following particulars concerning myself.

When the first impressions, Sire, were formed in my mind concerning the unlawfulness of Christians entering into or remaining in the military profession, I cannot exactly recollect. To my shame, I may, I believe, say that I never thought seriously on the subject till within the last four years. Whenever I heard feelings of disapprobation expressed concerning war, I was led to regard them as Bishop Horsley did, as a species of puritanical cant; so fully was I satisfied that war, and consequently my profession, was perfectly consonant with the precepts of Christianity. About the time I

the year 1822, I came to the resolution to investigate the subject more closely than I had hitherto done; and if, after such investigation, it should appear to me that my profession was irreconcilable with the precepts of Christ, I determined to resign my naval rank and half-pay, although I placed a high value upon the former, and the latter forms a large portion of a very limited income; and I was thereby subjecting myself, and not myself alone, to a very considerable change in my mode of living, and this at an advanced period of life, when its comforts and conveniences are most wanted.

To take a step so highly important to me in many points of view, but particularly in a religious one, upon the first impression of my mind, would have been highly improper; for even the best informed persons frequently change their opinions, and see the same transaction in different points of view at different periods of time. From the very novel nature of the act I contemplated, I thought it possible that this might happen to myself; and that, in my ardour to do what I deemed an act of religious duty, I might hastily take a step of which I might hereafter see just cause to repent, and when repentance could not avail me. I was also aware, that what I proposed doing, being so much at variance with established custom, might be attributed to vanity, or an affectation of singularity—motives by which, as far as I know myself, I have never been greatly influenced. Added to these considerations, I felt much difficulty as to the manner in which I should withdraw myself from my profession. It appeared to me, (though it may savour of vanity thus to express myself,) that the measure I contemplated was one of very great importance both in a political and religious point of view.

Under these perplexing circumstances, I came to the resolution to retain my half-pay three years longer

should my life be so long spared, and to dedicate that time to serious inquiry on a subject constantly pressing upon my mind. This delay I considered as likely to cure me of any false notions that either ignorance, fanaticism, or vanity might generate. It has, Sire, pleased the Divine Disposer of events to grant me these years; and I hope they have not been passed unprofitably. After every inquiry and consideration on one of the most important subjects that can occupy the human mind, as far as my abilities and opportunities have enabled me, and after frequent and earnest prayer to that Being who alone has power over the minds of men, that I might do nothing dishonourable to Christianity, nor injurious to society, I have seen no reason to regret the resolution I then formed. Some may blame me, and with seeming justice, for taking so long a time for consideration, on what I now speak of as so very clear a point. I do not however regret this delay, as it has effectually convinced me that I have acted not only from pure motives, but also on correct principles; and I feel the fullest confidence that I shall never repent of the step that conscience has dictated. This delay has also enabled me to correct the false views I have entertained till within the last twelve months concerning what is called *defensive war*. On this subject I have indeed changed my opinions.

When I first formed the resolution of withdrawing from the naval profession, I was, Sire, impressed with an idea, perhaps rather a confused one, that though wars of conquest and aggression were clearly unjustifiable and wicked, yet that wars of defence were not so. For individuals or nations to engage in these, I con-

my conviction, that warfare of any kind, offensive or defensive, national or individual, is most plainly interdicted by the spirit, if not by the letter, of the Gospel. It is absolutely irreconcilable with the characteristic precepts of Christianity, as well as with the prophecies which I have already quoted. These precepts and prophecies teach us that to obey the will of God is "the whole business of morality." I may be under a delusion; but regarding war of any kind as incompatible with this obedience, I must either reject as sophisticated the excuses and apologies of learned and ingenious men in favour of defensive war, or set at nought both the Gospel and the prophecies.

Politicians consider the being ready for war as the surest means of avoiding it, and as proof of true wisdom. This is mere assertion: and history and experience admonish us, that if one nation arms by way of precaution and self-defence, another and another will do the same; and these defensive armaments, it is more than probable, will produce offensive operations. Defensive armaments may secure temporary safety, but they are calculated to create jealousy and provoke hostility, and to verify the remark of him who "spake as never man spake;" viz: that "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." We are told on the sure testimony of prophecy that wars will cease; but we have not the slightest intimation that this will be effected by defensive armaments: on the contrary, we have abundant reason to believe that the spread of Christianity (or "the knowledge of the Lord,") will produce this. (*Isaiah*, xi. 9.)

A meek and unresisting spirit seems to be the keystone of Christianity: it appears to be regarded by our Saviour as a kind of celestial panoply, not merely securing to its possessor the approbation of God, but also

protecting him from wrong and insult. These marks may be applied to families, and also to nations. Its effects with these latter, it is true, remain to be tried; but in, I believe, the only instance in which this spirit has been put in practice upon an extensive scale, it succeeded. It will succeed with Christian nations, unless Christianity and civilization render them more ungovernable and unprincipled than the unchristian Indians with whom William Penn had to deal. They were completely won and subdued by this divine and truly Christian armour; and, when its use is better understood, Christian nations will cease to wage war; and there will be "nothing to hurt or destroy."

Some, Sire, may cavil with my having, on the present occasion, appealed so confidently to prophecy. It has, indeed, been too much the custom with some commentators, even with men of considerable eminence as writers and scholars, to identify the awful and wonderful events that have been passing in our days, with some of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, which admit of a variety of interpretations. The prophecies to which I have appealed are of a different description, and can hardly be misapprehended or misunderstood. These prophecies place our religion in the most dignified and delightful point of view, as the path to universal peace and philanthropy. The Author of our divine religion is also by these prophecies placed in the most lovely and captivating point of view, as peculiarly entitled to our veneration, gratitude, our obedience, and our love. This application of prophecy adds strength to the Christian evidences, and repels one of the most powerful arguments of sceptics against the religion of Christ.

I trust, Sire, that the state of *gross darkness*, which has for so many centuries been producing war and destruction, is fast passing away, and light approaching with a steady step; and that, without impropriety or indulging the imagination, we may consider the

gard the times in which we live with a partial and complacent eye ; and, comparing them with those that are past, to exult in our superiority over our predecessors. We have, indeed, much cause for gratitude for many national blessings ; but, as Christians, none for exultation, when we call to mind the torrents of human blood that have been shed in our own times, in direct opposition to the precepts of Jesus.

When Christians, Sire, shall subdue the anti-christian spirit of ambition, of resistance, and revenge,—or, in the words of St James, those *lusts* from whence wars arise,—and, instead of emulating the heroes of antiquity, to which the present course of education propels them, they shall take Jesus Christ for their pattern :—when, like him, men shall think it more honourable to submit with patience to a blow, than to return it with interest :—when men shall prefer the approbation of God, to the admiration of their fellow-men ; or, in a word, when they become Christians :—then “ will they beat their swords into plough-shares ;” and “ nation will not rise up against nation, neither will they learn war any more.” This, Sire, is the language of prophecy ; and in the application of it, and of the precepts of Jesus, I trust that “ *I have spoken forth the words of truth and soberness.*”

I think it incumbent upon me, Sire, before I conclude this letter, to assure Your Majesty that, in retiring from your Naval Service, I am solely actuated by those motives which I have set forth ; and that I have not been led to take this step by any men or body of men. To one friend only has my intention been known from the first ; and I have the happiness to know that this friend, (who will be a fellow-sufferer from the act,) most cordially approves what I have done. Nor, Sire, have I, till very near the time of sending these pages to the press, read any of the valuable publications of Peace Societies in this and other countries. The recent perusal of some of their works has afforded me the most heart-felt satisfaction, together with the pleasure of knowing that though these pages may excite feelings of pity and contempt in many, yet that they are in accordance with the opinions of numbers of

pious Christians of distinguished rank and literary attainments in different parts of the world. Believing, Sire, that the publications of the Peace Societies have not only a tendency to annihilate war, but also to promote religion, and with it obedience to sovereigns, I sincerely wish they may be more extensively read than they have hitherto been.

May it, Sire, please the Supreme Disposer of events to grant that Your Majesty's reign may be prolonged, and that it may continue to be peaceable, prosperous, and happy; and may it accord with the wisdom and benevolence of His divine government of the world, shortly to put an end to all war and bloodshed, and incline the hearts of men to deeds of mercy and philanthropy: and may Your Majesty, and the highly-favoured nation you govern, be made the glorious instruments of spreading through the world pure and unadulterated Christianity, or that "*knowledge of the Lord*" which can alone produce and secure the peace and civilization of the world.

Thus highly honoured, Britain may indulge in the hope that not only her existence as a nation, but also her tranquillity will endure; and that she will not be consigned, by the great Ruler of the universe, to the lot uniformly recorded in history of other great and warlike nations, who, having been raised by the sword, have also perished by the sword.

Though, Sire, I have, for the reasons I have stated, withdrawn myself from Your Majesty's Naval Service, it will ever be my most earnest wish, as it will also be my constant endeavour, as a Christian and as a subject, to approve myself, with unfeigned deference and respect,

Sire,
Your Majesty's most faithful,
Most dutiful, and devoted Servant,
THOMAS THRUSH.

*Sutton, near Thirsk,
14th Jan. 1825.*

ON
DETRACTION,

AND

CURIOSITY ABOUT THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS:

CHIEFLY TAKEN FROM THE WRITINGS

OF

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

NO. 30.

New-York:

**A VARIETY OF TRACTS, ON MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, ARE
FOR SALE AT THE BOOK-STORES OF SAMUEL WOOD AND SONS,
NO. 261, AND MAHLON DAY, NO. 372, PEARL-STREET, AT ONE CENT
FOR TWELVE PAGES, TO THOSE WHO BUY FIFTY OR MORE COPIES
FOR DISTRIBUTION.**

1825.

M. DAY, PRINTER.



ON DETRACTION, &c.

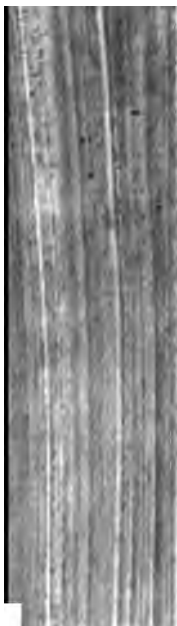


It was the lot of the excellent man whose sentiments on detraction and idle curiosity are here presented to the reader, to be placed during a great part of his life in stations of peculiar difficulty; in which, from the intolerance of his superiors on the one hand, and the temper of those over whom he was set on the other, his endeavours to promote peace, and to reform abuses were constantly frustrated, and he was glad to retire in his latter years to a scene of greater quiet. Under such circumstances, he must have experienced much of that, from which few good men in private life, and none of those whose virtue is tried in public, are exempted—the malice of idle and evil minded persons, exercised in calumny and detraction. He has, accordingly, treated the subject feelingly; not as *resenting* his own share of suffering from this cause, but, as having on his mind, a just and deep sense of its mischievous tendency, and utter inconsistency with the true Christian temper. And the reader will observe, that, having this occasion to treat of the vices of the tongue, he has no sooner done it, than he rises as if glad to escape from so painful a theme, to the contemplation of that perfect and glorious Example, whose word dwelling richly in the heart, leavening the affections, and setting a watch before the lips, can alone eradicate from our practice, this easily besetting sin.

Thus much it seemed proper to premise, that the reader might the better understand some parts of what follows, from the pen of Leighton; and which is first exhibited in “An Exposition of the Ten Commandments,” under the text “*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*”

“The end of the commandment is, to guard the good name of men from injury, as the former commandment doth his goods; this possession being no less, yea, much more precious than the other: and, because the great robber and murderer of a good name is the mischievous detracting tongue, actuated by a malignant heart; it requires in the heart a charitable tenderness of the good name of our brethren, and that will certainly produce truth and charitable speech in the tongue.

Perjury, or false testimony in a public judiciary way, is, we see, by the express words and letter of the command, forbidden



any thing that of truth is reprobable, we see them by secret and friendly admonition, but selves divulge it abroad to others : for it is a deceit to think, that because that is not for thee thou speakest, this keeps thee free of the contrary false intention and malice, make it caltough for the matter of it, what thou sayest thou gainest by it is, that thou dost tumble another in the sin of another, and makest it possibly it is his own, that committed it ; for he per touch of remorse for it ; whereas it is evident in it : and though thou preface it with a wregret and semblance of pitying him, and add with commending him in somewhat else ; this is but the sugaring of the pill, to make men swallow it and thy bitter malice to pass unperceived. Th to watch over the lives of others, must do it fit gently admonishing and rebuking privately prevails not, they may, yea, they ought to do but all in love, seeking nothing but the glory salvation of souls 4. Easy hearing and ent reports and detraction when others speak their This is that which maintains and gives substance, otherwise it would starve and die of itself

thing that keeps up the trade, makes backbiting and detraction abound so in the world, and verifies that known observation in the most, that the slanderer wounds three at once, himself, him he speaks of, and him that hears : for this third, truly it is in his option to be none of the number ; if he will, he may shift his part of the blow, by not believing the slander ; yea, may beat it back again with ease upon the slanderer himself by a check or frown. 5. They offend that seek in any way at the expense of the good name and esteem of others, to increase their own, out of others' ruins to make up themselves ; and therefore pull down as much as they can, and are glad to have others to help them to detract from the repute of their brethren, particularly any that are likely to surpass and obscure them ; and for this reason incline always rather to hear and speak of the imperfections and dispraise of others, than to their advantage, and would willingly destroy the good name of their brethren, that theirs might reign alone. This is a vile disease, and such as cannot be incident to any truly religious mind ; no, such need not this base dishonest way to raise themselves, but are glad to see virtue, and whatsoever is praiseworthy, to flourish in all ; as these are lovers of God indeed, and his glory, and not their own ; so they are glad to see many enriched with his best gifts ; for seeing the good that all have, belongs to God, as the sovereign owner and dispenser, this contents and rejoices his children when they see many partake of his bounty, for the more is his glory : and as in love to their brethren, they are always willing to take notice of what is commendable in them, and to commend it, so they do this the more willingly, because they know that all praise of goodness at last terminates and ends in God, as Solomon says of the rivers, *Unto the place from whence they come, thither they return again.* 6. They sin against this commandment, who although they no way wrong their neighbour's good name, yet are not careful to do their utmost to right it when it suffers, to remove aspersions from it, and to clear it all that may be.

For this is here required ; to desire, and delight in, and further the good name of others, even as our own, to look most willingly on the fairest side of their actions, and take them in the best sense, and be as inventive of favourable constructions, (yet without favouring vice,) as malice is witty to misinterpret to the worst : to observe the commendable virtues of our brethren, and pass by their failings.

It is lamentable to consider how much this evil of mutual detraction, and supplanting of the good name one of another, is

rooted in man's corrupt nature; and how it spreads and grows in their converse, as the Apostle Paul cites it out of the Psalmist, as the description of our nature: *Their throat is an open sepulchre, they have deceitful tongues, and the poison of asps is under their lips*, Rom. iii. 13. Their throat is an open sepulchre, full of the bones as it were of others' good names that they have devoured: and, Rom. i. 29, 30, amongst other endowments, they are whisperers, backbiters, spiteful. But it is strange that Christians should retain so much of these evils, who profess themselves renewed, and sanctified, and guided by the Spirit of God. Consider in your visits and discourses, if something of this kind doth not entertain you often, and lavish away that time you might spend in mutual edification, abusing it to descant upon the actions and lives of others, in a way that neither concerns nor profits us, taking an impertinent foolish delight in inquiring and knowing how this party lives, and the other. This is a very common disease; and thus men are most strangers at home, have not leisure to study, and know, and censure themselves, they are so busied about others. It may be there is not always a height of malice in their discourses, but yet by much babbling to no purpose, they slide into idle detraction and censure of others without intention, for "*in multitude of words there wants not sin.*"

And the greatest part are so accustomed to this way, that if they be put out of it, they must sit dumb and say nothing. There is, I confess, a prudent observation of the actions of others, a reading of men, as they call it, and it may be done with Christian prudence and benefit; and there may be too a useful way of men's imparting their observation of this kind one to another concerning the good and evil, the abilities more or less that they remark in the world; but truly it is hard to find such as can do this aright, and know they agree in their purpose with honest harmless minds, intending evil to none, but good to themselves, and admitting of nothing but what suits with this. Amongst a throng of acquaintance a man may find very few by whose conversation he will be really bettered, and that return him some benefit for the expense of his time in their society. However, beware of such as delight in vanity and lying, and defaming of others, and withdraw yourselves from them, and set a watch before your own lips; learn to know the fit season of silence and speech, for that is a very great point of wisdom, and will help very much to the observing this precept, to give no more than is required by wisdom.

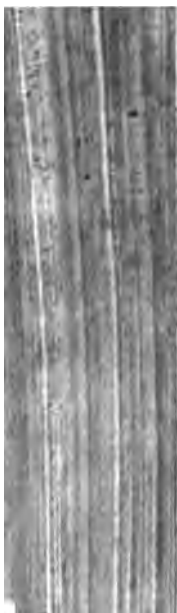
those that are about you, nor altogether a barren tree yielding nothing ; but a fruitful tree, a *Tree of life to your neighbour*, as Solomon calls the tongue of the righteous.

And let your hearts be possessed with those two excellent graces, humility and charity, then will your tongue not be in danger of hurting your neighbour, for it is pride and self-love makes men delight in that. These are the idols to which men make sacrifice of the good name and reputation of others. The humble man delights in self-disesteem, and is glad to see his brethren's name flourish ; it is pleasing music to him to hear the virtues of others acknowledged and commended, and a harsh discord to his lowly thoughts to hear any thing of his own. And the other, charity, thinks no evil ; is so far from casting false aspersions on any, that it rather casts a veil upon failings and blemishes : "*Love covers a multitude of sins.*"

Thus far our Author on the subject of Detraction : that of curiosity concerning the affairs of others is treated of in a discourse on the text, *John*, xxi. 22. "*What is that to thee ? Follow thou me.*"

After some allusion to our Lord's conversation with his disciples, in the interval between his resurrection and ascension, and in particular to his thrice repeated question to the apostle Peter, who had so lately denied him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me ?" the author proceeds :—

"St. Peter answers fervently, but most modestly : whereupon his Lord gives him a service suitable to his love, *Feed my sheep* ; for which none are qualified but they that love him. But when he grows bold to ask a question, he gets a grave check, and a holy command, *What is that to thee ? Follow thou me.* But it is the common course of many, to wear out their days with impertinent inquiries. There is a natural desire in men to know the things of others, and to neglect their own, and to be more concerned about things to come than about things present. And this is the great subject of conversation : even the weakest minds must descant upon all things, as if the weakest capacities could judge of the greatest matters : by a strange levelling of understandings, more absurd and irrational than that of fortunes. Many men are beside themselves, never at home, but always roving. It is true, a man may live in solitude to little purpose ; so that when one converseth with himself it had need be said, *See that it be with a good man.* A man alone may be in worse company than is in all the world, if he bring not into him better company than himself or all the world, which is the fellowship of God, and the Holy Spirit. Yet the matters of the



business is to follow Jesus, and to trace his life until a strong voice, could I lift it up as a trumpet a retreat from our unnatural contentions and wranglings for religion. Oh! what are the things compared to the great things of God.

There is an ETERNAL MIND that made all things, and ed out the heavens, and formed the spirit of man, let us tremble before Him, and love the Lord. We have indelible characters of their own excellencies, deep apprehensions of another state, wherein according to what we have done upon earth. Hath the Son of God declared to be such by his miraculous resurrection from the dead? Hath there not been to us, from different ages, the history of martyrs, through racks and fires, and their own blood, to shall we throw off all these? Better be the poorest and most distempered person upon earth, without God, than the greatest wit and highest mind without God; profane; or though not such, if void of any justness of the fear of God. Some religious persons are persons, yet in all ages there have been greater and more generous souls truly religious, than even the whole tribe of atheists and libertines.

Let us therefore follow the holy Jesus. Our worldly concerns concern us not, compared to this. //

him. He took our nature upon him, that he might transfuse his into us. His life was a tract of doing good, and suffering ill. He spent the days in preaching and healing, and often the nights in prayer. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners. Humility, meekness, and charity, were the darling virtues of Christ. He was meek, and reviled not again; though he met with the greatest injuries. The rack of his cross could make him confess no anger. In that hour of his great extremity was his most affecting and ever memorable intercession put forth: "*Father forgive them, they know not what they do.*" Charity was so dear to him, that he recommended it as the characteristic by which all might know his disciples, "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.*" John, xiii. 35. But alas! by this all may know we are not his disciples, because we hate one another. But that we may imitate him in his life, we must begin with his death, and must die with him. Love is a death. He that loves is gone, and lost in God, and can esteem or take pleasure in nothing besides him. This death of Jesus mystically acted in us, must strike down all things else, and he must become our all. Oh! that we would resolve to live to him that died, and to be only his, and humbly follow the crucified Jesus. All else will be quickly gone. How soon will the shadows that now amuse us, and please our eyes, fly away?"

The following remarks in conclusion of this interesting subject, are from the pen of another writer:—

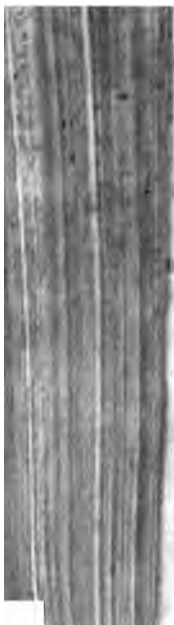
The excellent things of religion, then, are undoubtedly the great truths in which Christians agree, and the great objects for which they associate: the worship of God, the gospel of Christ, the communion of the Holy Spirit, the practice of good works, the maintenance of peace and good order in the churches. For the right discharge and enjoyment of these, there are required on our part, deliberation, calmness, watchfulness, humility, self-disesteem. But there are things having little or no real connexion with religion, which are yet very ready to spring out of the subject, when it becomes a topic of conversation; and to be treated with much zeal and interest, in the disposition, (sometimes not very charitable,) which happens to prevail at the moment: and this not among the inconsiderate *good sort of people* only, but by characters, in other respects it may be, religiously circumspect:—things with which religious people may occupy themselves, to the *misapplication* at least of their own time and talents, if not

to the disturbing the peace of their neighbours, and the good order and harmony which they imagine they are endeavouring to promote. To come to the point, and specify the particular object in view :—Among those who, from religious motives, associate more peculiarly with each other, there are always circumstances which distinguish certain members, and mark them out, (for the time or constantly,) as objects of notice to their brethren. Some office or service in the church, some appointment or connexion, some loss or acquisition, some dispute or some embarrassment ;—things not necessarily conferring or impeaching reputation, but having, in most minds, a ready bearing upon one or other of these consequences. First comes the mention of the thing in general terms, or a question put to elicit information about it, and this seems harmless enough : for how are we to know of events and circumstances around us, if they are never mentioned in conversation ? But curiosity and talkativeness do not usually rest here ; and by degrees, a variety of remarks, and other inquiries follow. If the subject be engaged in a public service, for instance ; any thing peculiar in the nature of this, or in his manner of discharging it ; his apparent excess of zeal, or suspected want of it, his imagined advancement or retrogradation in usefulness ; all these, before the discussion terminates, may have been treated and decided on ; with an allotment of praise, or slight, or censure, according to the previous standing of the individual in the opinion of the company. If a private character be in question, it may be needful to go a step further for the materials of the discourse : and now, not the conduct only of the person, in the case under review, and in such others as it may bring up, but his very thoughts and motives shall be stated and judged of, by those who perhaps never were an hour in his company ! In the mean time, the reflection, (it may be,) never occurs, that they are doing this on slight and casual information, and without hearing him in his own defence ; that were they ever so well informed, it may not be their proper business : lastly, that their own states, (which at all times should most of all concern them,) are possibly neither very safe, nor very amiable.

The censure we are now passing, applies also to unmeaning inquiries and remarks, which, from a habit of conversation, or a

is the subject of it. But, *What is that to thee?* If thou help him to do well, canst save him from a slip, or re him from a fall, set about it: but, by all means, with individual himself, in the first place, and not before coming in his absence. If the "oil and wine" begin to spill out by the way, it is very doubtful, whether they will be poured into his wounds, for their *healing* at least. Now thou, in this as in other respects, the Great Master; the questions always tended, more or less directly, to some purpose; and so should our curiosity about others, or should learn to repress it.

Independently of the hurt which individuals, who give into practice of busying themselves about others, may sustain, it is one that is pretty sure to keep their own failings too (in the back ground,) the harm done in religious society the continual propagation of reports, neither amounting to scandal, nor maliciously intended, is probably not inderable. For character is from this cause too commoned, not by the just medium of competent information, near observation and experience of the man, but by the is and the samples of the retailers of small anecdote. ce it happens, when the individual comes afterwards the same circles, if the specimen given of him have led to condemnation, he has to encounter the closed gates of idice; if to praise, (as we are apt to extol, in all respect those whom we admire in any,) the prepossession in favour is such, that the stranger may well wonder, if he modest and humble man, why he is made so much of. it is probable, he will neither feel so much at his ease, lo so much good in either case, as if he had stood at first re plain but solid ground of simple religious fellowship. ext to the influence of religious principle on the mind, no means are efficacious without it,) we may mention, antidote to the infection of fruitless curiosity, the prom of suitable occupation for the thoughts at home. Hast a calling, an occupation? follow it with upright diligence, and if it do not at present fill thy hands and thy mind, thy soon bid fair to do so. And now, be careful that it e thee not from thy Maker's service, nor prevent thee using that best of all recreations, the doing good to thy labour. But, thou hast an inquisitive mind, in which is left a surplus of activity, after the discharge of the non affairs of life.—Study the works of creation, and rays of Providence, in the natural, the civil, and religious



marking and study living characters. And supposing still a right disposition of the affection in view. To do this with the greater ease to the dead. Spreading before thee the page biography, and above all, those records, dicta of Truth, and preserved through successive instruction: read there the good deeds of the late them, their faults and failings to show that which is unavoidably to be found in all the crimes and errors of the multitude; a warning. If in such a course of study, thou art blessed with Divine blessing, profit above many thy equals qualified to give counsel, forget not thy own former days: have patience with the ignorant who are out of the way; and when there is occasion to move forward, let it be done with gentleness. For the things we offend all. If any man offend thee, thou shalt be the same is a perfect man, able also to bridle the tongue. *Jam. iii. 2.* The fountain being pure a stream will partake of its properties. "But whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are *of good report*; if there be any virtue, and if there be any knowledge, let these things abide on these things." *1st Pet. iv. 8.*











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